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AUTHOR:

JOWETT , REV .
WILLIAM

TITLE:

THE CHRISTIAN
VISITOR

PLACE:

LONDON

DATE:

1840

Master Negative #

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L. 1840.

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TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

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REDUCTION RATIO: 16x

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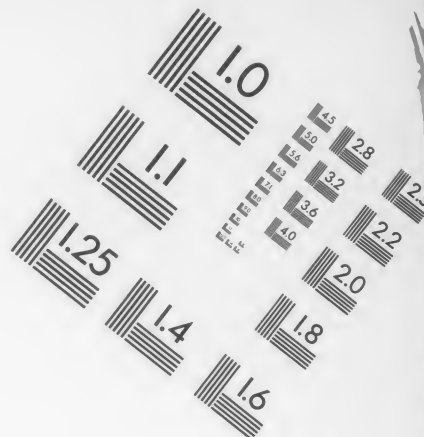
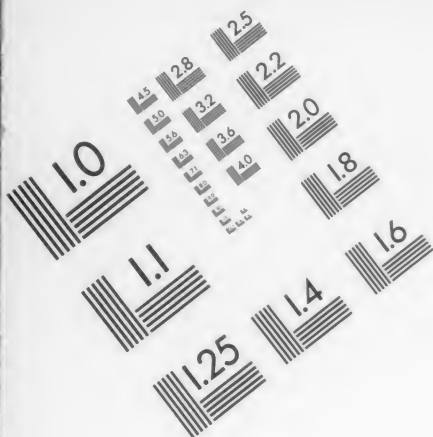


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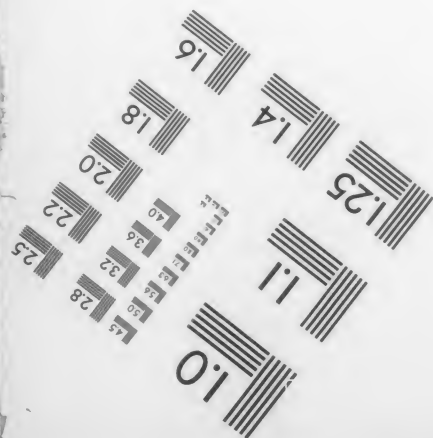
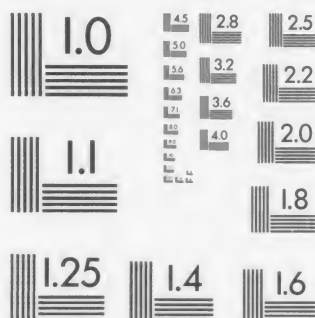
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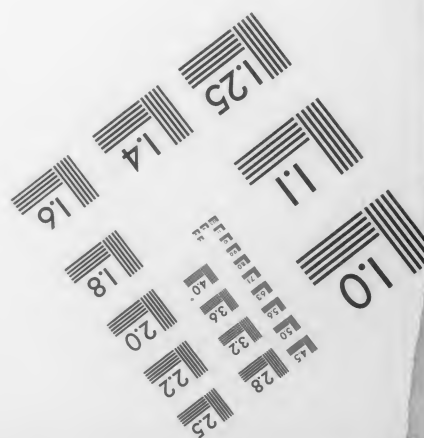
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THE
CHRISTIAN VISITOR:

OR,
SELECT PORTIONS

FROM

The Acts of the Apostles & the Epistles,

WITH

EXPOSITIONS AND PRAYERS.

DESIGNED

TO ASSIST THE FRIENDS OF THE SICK AND AFFLICTED.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM JOWETT, M.A.

LATE FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY R. B. SEELEY, & W. BURNSIDE:

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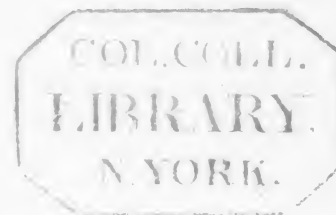
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LONDON:
PRINTED BY RICHARD WATTS,
Crown Court, Temple Bar

THE
Christian Visitor,
ON THE
ACTS AND EPISTLES.



FOR I DETERMINED NOT TO KNOW ANY THING AMONG YOU,
SAVE JESUS CHRIST, AND HIM CRUCIFIED.
1 COR. II. 2

PREFACE

10 Ap. 85

IN the present Volume of "The Christian Visitor," the Author has aimed at explaining, in a style adapted to the comprehension of Readers of every class, the grand Doctrines and Precepts of the Gospel, according to that full exhibition of them, which is given in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistolary Parts of the New Testament.

Since his first publication of this kind, in a Volume containing Thirty Portions selected from the whole Bible, and entitled "Scripture Readings," the Author's plan has been gradually extending itself, first to the Four Gospels, and now to the remainder of the New Testament. The first-named Work being now out of print, Ten of the Portions therein contained are here reprinted; and will be found, distributed in their proper order, among the Fifty-four comprised in the present Volume.

It may be expedient to repeat a remark made in the former Volume, that, should any of the Por-

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tions appear too long, it will be easy to select a few paragraphs, or even a few sentences, which may be sufficient for those who are suffering extreme weakness.

May our Gracious Master accompany with his blessing this further attempt to make known the Gospel to the Poor! May those who read the book to others, find it profitable to themselves! And thus may many immortal souls be led to the knowledge and enjoyment of the ways of Peace!

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THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

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I. THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Acts ii. 36—41.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

WHEN our Lord Jesus Christ was about to leave this world, He comforted his sorrowing Disciples with the assurance that He would send to them the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who should abide with his Church for ever. This promise

was given shortly before his death: and on his resurrection from the dead, "being seen of them forty days," he reminded them of his words, and bade them wait for the fulfilment of the promise.

After his ascension into heaven, the Disciples continued together, waiting on the Lord with prayer and supplication, yet ten days more. At length—it being the fiftieth day after Christ's resurrection—"they were all with one accord in one place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind; and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

A multitude of people then came together—foreign Jews, "out of every nation under heaven," who had come up to Jerusalem to worship at the feast:—and Peter, standing up with the eleven, addressed to them the discourse contained in this chapter. Christ was then preached in all the fulness of his grace: and the Lord carried the word with saving power to the hearts of many who heard it.

How great was the harvest of souls on this occasion! Three thousand believers baptized in one day! These were the first-fruits: many more were afterwards added to the Church. Oh that thousands may be continually gathered into the fold of Christ, through the doctrine of the Apostles!

What I desire to ask of you now, my friend, is, whether *you* have truly understood, and heartily

embraced this Gospel, to the saving of your soul. This is the question, which I would earnestly press upon you.—Let us follow those parts of the narrative which are applicable to ourselves: they will guide us in the inquiry into our own real state.

1. First, "Have you known and confessed our Lord Jesus Christ, as the living and true God, made Man for your salvation?"—On this point St. Peter reasons very closely with the Jews. They had rejected Christ: they had treated him as a blasphemer, and an impostor. Peter declares him to be truly God: showing him to be "both Lord and Christ." His miracles, his spotless life, his holy teaching, his resurrection and ascension, and his giving of the Holy Spirit—all these proved him to be Divine. Let this, then, be the first inquiry: "Have you known him, and adored him, as your God?" As Jesus said to that blind man, whom he had restored to sight, so let me ask of you, "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?"

2. Next, "Have you truly repented of your sins, and come to Jesus Christ for salvation?"—You have not, with your hands, crucified the Lord Jesus: but every sinner does, by his sins, crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. Are you convinced of this? And have you so felt it, as to be alarmed for the safety of your soul? Observe, the repenting Jews were "pricked in their hearts." The sermon of St. Peter pierced their consciences, through and through, with the deepest convictions of their guilt and danger. Have *you* ever, in like manner, cried out, "What shall I do to be saved?"

Have you prayed for escape and deliverance? Have you indeed repented, and come to Jesus for the remission of sins? Have you gladly received the word of the Gospel? Have you, through faith in Jesus, had your conscience purged from dead works, to serve the living God? Do you come out from the world, and do you strive to save yourself from this untoward generation?

3. These are weighty questions: but there is one inquiry more, which I am anxious to fix on your heart: "Are you *now* living under the guidance of the Holy Ghost?"—It is not necessary that you should, like the Apostles, receive extraordinary and miraculous gifts: but it *is* necessary to salvation, that each one of us should experience His ordinary working on the heart; leading us to holiness, and peace, and joy, and love. Let me then ask, "Is your mind enlightened by the Spirit? Is your will conformed to the will of God? Are your affections made holy?"—The gift of a new heart is freely promised to us, and to our children, however far off from God we may once have been. Have you asked for this gift? Have you obtained it, in answer to your prayers? Are you following after holiness?

O think how great and blessed a change is made in a man's character, when he is brought under the teaching of God's Holy Spirit! He then repents in earnest, and believes the Gospel. He immediately becomes a new man in Christ Jesus.—My friend, receive gladly this word of exhortation: and may it help forward the salvation of your soul!

PRAYER.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast promised to be with thy servants alway, even unto the end of the world: Graciously pour out upon us thy Holy Spirit, that he may dwell in us, as our Teacher, Sanctifier, and Comforter. And grant, that in all our prayers, and in all our labours and sufferings here below, we may ever enjoy thy presence, and find thy grace sufficient for us.

We confess, O Lord, that we are unworthy, through our manifold sins, to ask of Thee any favour. But we beseech thee, now that thou art exalted at the right hand of the Father, to plead there on our behalf the merit of thy most precious blood. And do thou, Heavenly Father, for thine own dear Son's sake, blot out all our iniquities: receive us graciously, and love us freely.

Look, O Lord, upon thy whole Church, and shed upon it abundantly the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost. Endue the Ministers of the Gospel with the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind. Let the word spoken by them never be spoken in vain. The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few. O send forth more Labourers into thy harvest! Raise up Evangelists, to go forth, everywhere preaching the word: and let thy Spirit so accompany their faithful ministrations, that thousands may be converted to the faith, and nations born in a day.

Hear us, Father of mercies; and do for us, and for all others, even more than we have asked, for the Redeemer's sake. Amen.

II.

THE MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN.

Acts vii. 54—60.

When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.

Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

THAT glorious Gospel which is life to some, is also to others death. When St. Peter boldly accused the Jews as murderers of the Lord Jesus, they were humbled: they repented, and believed to the saving of the soul. St. Stephen preached the same doctrine: yet the Jews, that heard him, "gnashed on him with their teeth." They were provoked—not humbled. They were cut to the heart with rage and vexation; and forthwith they hurried the holy man out of the city, and murdered him.

Surely this fact, duly considered, may make us tremble. We should inquire, whether or no *we* hear the Gospel with a right spirit of mind. Do we bow down our ears to instruction? or, do we stop our ears, obstinately refusing to hear the Truth because

it condemns us? Believe me, we never shall find the way of Salvation, unless we are willing to be humbled, and convinced of our guilt. If, however, we *are* thus brought low, we shall be prepared to glory in Jesus as our Saviour.

But let us turn our view from these unbelieving murderers, to contemplate the dying martyr himself. Three facts are particularly worthy of remark.

1. First; as Stephen was drawing near his end, he was favoured with a special revelation. He beheld the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. This sight was granted to him, partly in order to prepare him for the dreadful death he was about to suffer, and also to confirm his doctrine. As Abel was the first martyr in the Old-Testament History, so Stephen was the first martyr for Christ: and as "the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering;" so did Jesus also put a special honour upon Stephen—confirming his word, and comforting his soul.

We do not expect that we, when dying, shall see Christ with our bodily eyes, in the way that Stephen did. Yet all who love him sincerely, and especially those who have most faithfully laboured and suffered for His Name's sake, may look for peculiar consolations in their last moments. Jesus will uphold them by His spiritual presence, and honour Himself in them.

2. Observe, next, how richly Stephen was endowed with the spirit of his Master. He prays for his murderers. The dying Redeemer prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Stephen says, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Among his enemies, one of the most active was Saul, who afterwards was called Paul. How wonderfully was this prayer answered in the instance of St. Paul!—Though it is not particularly recorded, yet we may hope that many others of this murderous mob were afterwards brought to repentance.

One thing, my friend, we *can* do—(surely we *ought* to do it)—for those who persecute religion, and refuse to hear what is said to them. We always can pray for them. Prayers have often succeeded, when Sermons have failed. By all means we should endeavour to save some. O let us pray for all—even for those who seem the most hardened.

3. Lastly, behold how calmly Stephen parts with life! He commends his spirit to Jesus—"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." His murderers were all fury: he is all peace. The stones fly thick upon him from every side; yet they disquiet him not the least. Under the crush of the last deadly blow, he lays down his head as quietly as on a pillow. He even had composure enough to kneel down, in the midst of the horrid uproar; and having prayed—(in few words, yet loud enough to be heard by his murderers)—"he fell asleep."

This expression is used elsewhere in Scripture, to describe a happy death. Thus, our Lord says to his Disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth": and St. Paul commands us not to sorrow, even as others which have no hope, for them "which sleep in Jesus."

Whether *our* end is to be violent and painful, or quiet and easy, we know not: but we know that death, in some form, will very soon overtake us. Can you, my friend, look forward to that last scene with submission to the will of God? Are you prepared? Is the account of your stewardship made ready? Are you enjoying peace with God, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? Do you truly love, and long for, the appearing of our Lord?

PRAYER.

O Lord God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Judge, who hast appointed unto all men once to die: Dispose us, by thy good Spirit, to be continually looking forward to our last end. May we have our loins girded about, and our lights burning; that at what hour soever our Lord shall come, we may meet him with joy, and be received by him into glory everlasting.

Endue us, Heavenly Father, with such a stedfast faith in thy dear Son, and such boldness in confessing him, that we may never fear to acknowledge Him as our Lord and our God, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. By the fullness of thy Spirit dwelling in our hearts, O enable us to show forth all meekness towards those that oppose themselves, and to pray for them when they revile or persecute us. Restrain the malice of thine enemies; and graciously turn their hearts. Support and comfort those who suffer for Thy Truth. Bless, purify, and enlarge thy Church: and let the whole earth be filled with thy glory, for Jesus Christ's sake, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

III.

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

Acts ix. 1—16.

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the High Priest,

And desired of him letters to Damascus, to the synagogues; that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from Heaven:

And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

And Saul arose from the earth: and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold I am here, Lord.

And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:

And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

SAUL, who was afterwards named Paul, and was appointed by Christ to be the great Apostle of the Gentiles, was one of the most remarkable characters that ever lived. Before his conversion, he had been a strict, moral man: but he hated the humbling doctrines of the Gospel with the bitterest hatred, and persecuted the disciples of Christ with the utmost cruelty.

We have here a very instructive account of his conversion. Some of the circumstances attending it were clearly miraculous;—such as, the sudden light from heaven, the appearance of Christ, and the voice of the Lord speaking to him: his blindness also, and the recovery of his sight after three days. We do not expect such circumstances in our day; but the inward marks of real conversion are the same in every age. Suffer me now to explain what these marks are:—and may the same Spirit, who wrought on the mind of this Apostle, enlighten our understandings also, and make us obedient to the Truth!

1. The first mark of conversion, which we may notice in St. Paul, was his eager inquiry, "Who art thou, Lord?" He had always been sure that he was in the right: he supposed that he understood every thing about God and religion, well enough. But now, being stopped by the mighty hand of God,

and hearing his voice from heaven, he asks, "Who art thou, Lord?"—Just so is it with careless sinners, or self-satisfied formalists, when they begin to feel the word of God coming home to their consciences. They are constrained to ask, "Who is it—or what is it, that disturbs my conscience thus? What is it in the Bible, that searches me so closely? How comes it to pass that the words of a faithful Minister so deeply affect my soul?"

2. Observe next, in St. Paul, his astonishment and alarm at the awful condition he was in. He found himself charged with the dreadful guilt of fighting against God. He discovered, that Jesus, whose name and followers he had hated, was the Lord of glory. He saw that he himself was a furious madman, and a proud rebel. So does every awakened sinner sink with amazement and horror, on seeing his real state!

3. But this terror was accompanied, in the case of St. Paul, by submission and obedience to the Lord. He gave up contending: he yielded. He had raged with the fury of a tiger: now he became as gentle as a lamb. He asks, "What wilt thou have me to do?"—It is a sure mark of true conversion of heart, when we yield up our will to God, and desire to know and obey Him alone.

4. Again, a renewed soul patiently and earnestly seeks further instruction. Thus, when Saul is bid to go into the city, where it should be told him what he must do, he goes; and there he continues to wait, till God sends Ananias to teach him. An impatient man would have said, "Tell me all, instantly."—God

does not see fit to make every thing perfectly plain at once to a newly-awakened person. If we really wish to learn, we must take time and pains: we must look up to God for his teaching: we must be found patiently seeking Wisdom, daily sitting at her gates.

5. Another clear mark of conversion in Saul was, the spirit of prayer, with which he waited on the Lord. "Behold, he prayeth," is the description given of him by the Lord Jesus himself. How many things would Saul have to say to his new Lord and Master! How would he bemoan himself for his past ignorance and pride, and for his bitter cruelty towards Stephen and the other disciples! How would he long for a fuller revelation of the will of God! How would he cry for pardon; and seek grace and assistance to serve that adorable Jesus, whom he had been persecuting before! All these, and many more petitions of this kind, would he pour forth, from an overflowing heart, into the bosom of his Redeemer.—How different all this from his former Pharisaic prayers! He now prays from his inmost soul, with groanings that cannot be uttered.

6. That this was a real conversion, is proved by his after-life. His character was now totally changed. He lived a life of prayer, of meekness, of suffering, and of many labours of love. It would be very unwise to put our trust in mere feelings, or in appearances of conversion, however striking they may be: the proof of our profession must ever be our perseverance in good works. Nothing availeth but "faith which worketh by love."

Thus you perceive something of the beginning and the growth of grace in the soul. This may help you, my friend, in gaining a knowledge of your own state. Probably you are not expecting to become so eminent as St. Paul was: yet—remember—we all need the same complete conversion of heart. May we have grace to follow the Lord fully; that we may be His, and His only, now and for ever!

PRAYER.

O Thou Giver of all grace, who art wonderful in thy working on the hearts of the children of men: We bless thee for all those holy gifts which thou hast bestowed on thy ministering servants, for the good of thy Church. Especially, we thank thee for the conversion of thy blessed Apostle, St. Paul; whom thou didst ordain, as a chosen vessel, to publish the Gospel of Christ among the Gentiles.

O Lord, let thine Almighty Spirit work in the hearts of all unbelievers, and especially of all persecutors of Thy Church; that they may be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

Incline our hearts, we beseech thee, to hear and obey thy gracious voice; and draw out the desires of our souls towards thee in faith and prayer. Lord, teach us to pray: and answer the petitions which thy Spirit teaches us to offer up. Lead us into all truth, and enable us to glorify thy holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

IV.

THE OPENING OF THE HEART.

Acts xvi. 13—15.

And on the Sabbath we went out of the city, by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made: and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

It is a thing most necessary, to have our hearts opened to receive the word of the Lord. And yet it is impossible for a man, by himself, to open either his own heart, or the heart of another. This is the office of Almighty God, and of Him alone.

Generally, however, God employs certain means in doing this. For example: he sends forth pious Ministers, to preach the Gospel in the ears of the people. It is through His goodness, that places of worship are built, "where prayer is wont to be made." He is well pleased to behold worshippers assemble in such places. In this manner, Lydia, and other women, resorted to a quiet place of worship, which was a little out of the city, by a river side. Here the Apostle Paul found them, and worshipped together with them. Seeing them inclined to listen to his preaching, he discoursed to them concerning Jesus Christ. This was his favourite subject; because it was the most needful, the most glorious

one. This was the message which he had everywhere to deliver; namely, this "faithful saying, worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." How is Christ the Saviour to be made known, but by public preaching, and by visiting people at their dwellings?

Perhaps most of the women, who heard Paul preach, were somewhat attentive: but of Lydia it is particularly related, that the Lord opened her heart, so "that she attended to the things spoken of Paul;"—that is, with seriousness; and above all, with faith. She was a stranger in that place, and had come to follow her trade: she was a seller of purple. Many persons, in her case, would have said, "I must mind my business first:—when I get home, and am comfortably settled, with money enough, then I may attend to religion." But Lydia lost no time in welcoming the tidings of Salvation: and the reason of this is given, "The Lord opened her heart."

It is grievous to think, that there are some who enjoy many religious opportunities, but altogether throw them away. They hear the Gospel with ears open, but with hearts shut. Was it not so, when Christ preached? Did not the Pharisees hear him?—and yet, the more they heard, so much the more their ears grew heavy, and their heart waxed fat. So likewise the rich young man, mentioned in the Gospel, was favoured by Christ with a discourse particularly addressed to himself; but the discourse was so plain, and cut so deep at his favourite sin, the love of wealth, that he went away, and would hear no more. Thus also, in this very city of

Philippi, the preaching of the Apostle was bitterly hated by many.

O let me ask, Is there any favourite sin which *you* will not part with, and which makes the words of Christ unwelcome to you? Is there something in your heart, which hinders you from private prayer?—Never will you be truly blessed, till the door of your heart is opened by the Lord. O never think yourself happy, till sin is pardoned; till the love of sin is cast out; and the Spirit of Christ enters, to dwell within you.

It is very delightful, however, to see persons attentive to the word spoken. Thus, Lydia gave heed to what St. Paul said: she drank it in. This is always a good sign: we cannot help hoping that something good will come of it, when hearers listen with fixed attention. They are in the right way to profit.

As soon as Lydia had received Christ into her heart, she desired to honour His name, by making a public profession of her faith. She was baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. She earnestly desired to bring the Apostle and other pious persons to abide in her house. And when Paul and Silas had been cruelly beaten, still, as we read at the end of this chapter, she was not ashamed to receive them. If we love Christ and his servants, we shall make no secret of it: we shall gladly bear the Cross with them.

Let me now ask you a few plain questions.—First: Do you put yourself into the way of having your heart opened? do you go where Christ is preached? have you listened to the word of God,

and have you tried to pray?—Another question I would ask, is this: Do you find that your heart really does begin to open? If so, continue praying, that it may open more and more. Let not sin harden it. Especially, do not, through unbelief, keep away from Christ. Rather, let the thoughts of your ignorance and sinfulness draw you nearer to Jesus, that you may receive from Him pardon, and holiness, and peace.

PRAYER.

Lord, open thou our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things out of thy law: and effectually work in our hearts, that we may profitably learn thy holy word. Blessed be thy name, for the gift of the Holy Scriptures, for every faithful Minister and Teacher of the same, and for every opportunity of prayer that we enjoy. Show thyself present with us, whenever we draw nigh unto thee. Give us more grace; and carry on in us the work of faith with power.

Dispose us, O Heavenly Father, fervently to love thy servants who labour in the Gospel. Give us grace boldly to confess Christ, and to share in the sufferings and reproach of thy people.

O let thy blessed Gospel be preached in every part of this land, and throughout the whole earth. Whosoever thy ministering servants may labour, constrain multitudes to welcome the glad tidings of pardon and peace, through Jesus Christ: for whom we thank thee; and to whom, with thyself, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, be all honour, and glory, world without end. Amen.

V.

THE JAILOR'S CONVERSION.

Acts xvi. 23—34.

And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

And at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm; for we are all here.

Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

How happy are the servants of Christ! sorrowful, yet always rejoicing! To them there ariseth light in the darkness. Paul and Silas pray and sing as cheerfully in the prison, as if it were the house of God and the gate of heaven. They forget the smart of their stripes and their heavy chains, while they call on the sweet name of Jesus, for whom they were suffering.

The ungodly are not so. While the prisoners listen to the singing and prayers of Paul and Silas, the hard-hearted jailor goes to sleep. But he sleeps a dangerous sleep; and awakes frightfully, in the midst of an earthquake. He no sooner sees the prison doors all open, than he is ready to throw himself, by self-murder, into the arms of the devil.

O sinners! think how near you are to death—how near to hell! The sinner is always destroying his soul; and may be tempted to destroy his body. When he lays himself down at night, he sleeps at the edge of the pit of hell! O think! have *you* fled from this wrath?

But the voice of Mercy is heard—"Do thyself no harm." Stop in the midst of thy sins. Turn round, and see the hand of Mercy. Let Mercy save you. Jesus is able to save to the uttermost.

Behold now, what a different man the jailor becomes, the moment hope springs up! Immediately he makes his way to Paul and Silas, those messengers of peace. He falls down before them, trembling. This arose partly from his fright; but much more from having his conscience awakened, by the remembrance of his sins. And now he asks the most solemn question that possibly can be thought of. It is a question, for you, and for me, and for all sinners. Every man born into the world should be as eager and anxious as the jailor was, in asking, "What must I do to be saved?"

The sinner cannot save himself. His past sins are a debt, which he cannot himself pay off: another must pay it. Trying to be good in future

cannot save us. Even when the converted sinner obtains the gift of a new heart, still his good works will fall short, and he will need salvation to be freely given him by Christ.

This is the truth to which the jailor was brought; and we must all come to the same point:—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

St. Paul would have a great deal to say, in a short time, on this subject: but the jailor drank in his doctrine eagerly; he took of the water of life freely; and that very night he believed, and was baptized, with his whole house.

Let me now tell you, more particularly, how you may be saved, through Jesus Christ. Remember, that he shed his precious blood to take away your sins. Go then, with confession and prayer, and with faith in his blood, and wash away your sins, calling upon the name of the Lord. Know, also, that your own good works will never be able to recommend you to God. But he has wrought out a perfect righteousness, in which you may be clothed, if you will accept it. Ask of him to put it on you. Do not go about to establish your own righteousness.

Yet, you must be made holy, if you would be saved. Reflect, that Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God, and offering his Holy Spirit, to make you holy, if you will ask of him this gift. Will you not then believe in this Saviour? Will you not accept pardon and peace, through His blood? Do you not desire to be found in Him, and accounted righteous through His righteousness? Will you not love, serve, and pray to this Saviour, who died on

the cross for you; and who is now praying in heaven on behalf of all who come unto God by Him?

PRAYER.

O God our Creator and Preserver, we may well fall down before thee confounded, when we remember how carelessly we have walked through the many dangers of our life, forgetful of thee, and unprepared for judgment. There is but a step between us and death; and yet we have been hurried on by many foolish and hurtful lusts, which, but for thy forbearance, must long since have drowned us in destruction and perdition. We are amazed that we were not suffered utterly to destroy ourselves. Oh, let our cry now be, What must I do to be saved? Who shall pardon and deliver us? How shall we prepare for the great account, which we must shortly give, before thee, the Judge of quick and dead?

We flee unto thee, O Lord, through Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come. We pray thee to break the bonds of sin, wherewith we have been bound; and to undo the snares of Satan, by which we have been entangled: and so deliver us from going down into the pit. Yea, may our souls delight in thee, as our reconciled Father in Christ. We plead His name. Blot out our many sins: forgive us all that debt, which we are unable to pay. Bestow on us a living faith: and let the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, so work in us, that for the time to come we may joyfully serve Thee alone; and at length be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

VI.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

ROMANS i. 16, 17.

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

FAITHFULLY to receive the Gospel, is the sure and only way to blessedness. The Gospel is man's chief glory. But, alas, what multitudes are ashamed of Christ, and of his words! O may we not fall into so great a condemnation! My friend, I entreat you to welcome the tidings of Salvation. I pray that you may have grace heartily to believe in Jesus.

Consider the great plan of Salvation revealed in the Gospel. It is here called "the righteousness of God." The words may at first seem dark to you: or perhaps you may suppose they simply mean—that God is righteous. They signify, however, much more. These words, "the righteousness of God," point out to us the way, in which He is both just, and also the justifier of them that believe in Christ.

If God had been only just, and not merciful also, long ago he would have struck us dead, and sent us to hell for our sins. Dreadful as that punishment is, yet it is nothing more than what justice required. This, in truth, *will* be the end of those who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But God has laid on his Son Jesus Christ the iniquity of us all: and Christ has, for us, paid the

debt due to justice. To those who believe in Jesus, the Lord grants mercy and forgiveness. Christ has perfectly fulfilled this plan of Man's redemption: "He suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God." "God hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us"—that is, to be a sin-offering—"that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"—that is, that in Christ we might be justified, or accounted righteous.

Thus, you perceive, God was just in requiring the punishment of sin to be borne; and yet he is also merciful in accepting sinners, and accounting them righteous, on their believing in Christ. God is just, and yet the justifier. Thus is shown most fully "the righteousness of God."

Let us observe three things concerning this way of mercy.

First, "The righteousness of God is revealed"—God has *revealed* it to us in the Gospel. Man could not have discovered it. By himself, he would have been for ever in the dark. Sinners would have been ready to cry out, "God is too just, too holy, to pardon my sins!" But our Heavenly Father has mercifully shown to us the doctrine of salvation, and his particular way of saving us. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"—the gift of his own dear Son, and justifying righteousness through him.

Secondly: Observe how this salvation is to be received:—simply, by Faith. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved:"—thy sins shall be blotted out, no more to be remembered for thy condemnation. The blessing is given "to every

one that believeth." By faith we are justified from all things. 'We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings: wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.'

Lastly: Remark, that this Gospel, when received by faith, is "the power of God, unto salvation." God showed his Almighty power by creating the world: but he shows it still more in the redemption of the world by Christ Jesus. O think what it cost, to redeem a lost soul! Think of the wisdom, power, and love of God, displayed in this amazing work. Let us pray, my friend, for faith in this infinite power, in this infinite love of God towards us: and may He save you and me with an everlasting salvation!

PRAYER.

O Lord God of our salvation, who hast graciously made known to us the way of mercy, through thy dear Son, Jesus Christ: Grant to us that faith in him, by which we may obtain the gift of eternal life. Thou art righteous, and we are unholy: but Thou, Lord, art full of compassion, justifying every one that believeth in Jesus. Suffer us not to lose the benefits of redemption, through our own ignorance, or pride, or unbelief; but may we, with full purpose of heart, flee unto this hope set before us in the Gospel.

Let thy Holy Spirit, O Lord, carry on in us the work of faith with power. Subdue the love of sin,

and of all that is displeasing in thy sight. Since thou, O God, hast called us unto holiness, make us holy in all manner of conversation and godliness, to the honour of thy name, and the adorning of thy blessed Gospel, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

VII.

THE DEPRAVITY OF MANKIND.

ROMANS I. 32.

Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

THESE words, my friend, describe the awful lengths to which sinful men can go. The Apostle Paul had been speaking of sinners of different kinds; and now he sums up his account with this description of their desperate wickedness. A Christian cannot read the words without grief and horror.

The first thing to be observed, is, that sinners are continually doing "things worthy of death." Every sin is a transgression of God's law. Even a sinful thought is hateful to God. He sees the heart, and judges a sinful desire to be worthy of death. Much more do we provoke his anger, when our wicked thoughts lead to wicked words or deeds. "God is a righteous Judge, strong and patient; and God is provoked every day." The death we suffer in this world is part of the punishment of sin: but sinners deserve everlasting death also. Except they repent, they will perish eternally.

The daring madness of sinners is further shown in

this—that they sin on, though they *know* that they are doing things worthy of death. They defy God, knowingly, and wilfully.—Some, indeed, will not scruple to say that they do not believe in the punishment of Hell. But there is *this* proof of Hell begun in them, that they cannot shake off fear. Sometimes even the greatest sinners are startled at a shadow, or a whisper. In times of sickness, the stoutest of them are often troubled in their consciences. God has put Conscience within them, as his witness: so that they know what they deserve.

Have you, my friend, never felt conscience telling you, that the end of sin is death? It is very strange, if you have not; and it is very sad too. But I think something in your heart is telling you, at this moment, that all cannot end well, with those who live without God, and die without repentance. Oh, may the Spirit of God give you a tender heart!

Wicked men often try to comfort themselves with this wretched thought—"If I perish, thousands must perish besides: I am not the only sinner, nor the worst: let me take my chance with the rest."—But surely, if you were drowning, it would be no consolation to know that a thousand others were drowning with you. If your house were on fire, you would not lie still, and say, "There are others in the house besides me." No: you would rush out of danger as fast as possible; and you would alarm others, that they might escape too.

Once more: Observe herein the determined wickedness of the ungodly:—not content to sin alone, they delight to see others in the same snare. Sinners

"take pleasure" in sinners like themselves. Hence they tempt others to sin: and having thus made them as much the children of Hell as they themselves are, they join hand in hand, and make ungodliness their business, and even their sport. Thus, drunkards love the company of drunkards; they push one another on: they laugh, shout, sing, swear, boast of their drunken frolics, lose all decency, and glory in their shame. Licentious people seek the company of the licentious. Infidels, and blasphemers, keep society with those who say there is no God, no Devil, and no Hell. They are never so much in their element, as when jesting on the Bible, and ridiculing religious people.

Perhaps you have seen, possibly you have even joined company like this: perhaps when young—or in after-life. O remember what the Bible says: "Fools make a mock at sin!"

Remember the awful character given to one of the kings of Israel, whose name is so often introduced with these words: "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin!" Oh, what an intolerable load lies on those, who have not only their own, but likewise other people's sins to answer for!—a burden too terrible to describe!

My friend, lay these things to heart. Sin is no trifle. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." Yet the Saviour still most mercifully waits: he is still ready to forgive every repenting sinner, and to create in him a new heart. Let us pray earnestly to Him for the great blessings of pardon and holiness.

PRAYER.

O most holy God, who for our sins art justly displeased: We humbly implore thy forgiveness for all that is past, and thy grace to help in time to come. Hide thy face from our sins, and blot out all our iniquities. Renew us unto holiness. Strengthen us, by thy Spirit, in the inner man, that we may mortify the deeds of the flesh, and obtain victory over all our sinful affections and lusts.

O Lord, wash away all the guilt which we have brought upon ourselves, by causing others to sin. Deliver us from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou that art the God of our salvation. And stir up our desires and endeavours to bring men to Jesus, that they may obtain redemption through his blood. Where sin hath abounded, there let grace much more abound, both towards them and towards us, through the infinite merits of thy dear Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

VIII.

CONVICTION OF SIN.

ROMANS iii. 9—18.

What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous; no, not one:

There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good; no, not one.

Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

Their feet are swift to shed blood:

Destruction and misery are in their ways;

And the way of peace have they not known:

There is no fear of God before their eyes.

OUR Saviour Jesus Christ said, "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick:" and he added, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Accordingly, to know that we are sinners, is the first step towards receiving Christ. Here we must begin, if ever the Gospel is to gain entrance into our hearts. The words just read from St. Paul's Epistle are intended to make us know and feel that we are sinners. He shows us that we are all under sin. People of every age and every country; men, women, children, are all "under sin." As it is with diseases—some show themselves worse than others—so it is with sin: and therefore the Holy Scriptures here describe several kinds of sin. One, perhaps, may say, "I have not committed this sin:" and another may say, "I have not committed that sin." Still, all have committed some kind of sin; yea, many kinds. All have this dreadful disease in their souls; and all ought to be thankful that there is such a physician as Jesus Christ, ready to heal them.

We will consider, first, sins of the heart.—"There is none that understandeth." But perhaps you say, "What sin is there in this? I do not understand, because I am no scholar—I am not book-learned."

Well, then—if you are making ignorance your excuse, only look at the next sentence: "There is none that seeketh after God." Not seeking, shows not caring: *here* lies your sin. Surely you must confess that this is very sinful;—not to seek God, not to pray to him, not to wish to know him! Have you not spent many days of your life (perhaps years) in ignorance and carelessness about God? You would think it very sinful in children to neglect their parents: and yet have not you neglected your Heavenly Father?

St. Paul adds, "They are all gone out of the way." So you, I fear, have not taken the right way to be instructed. The Bible, alas! has been thrown aside; you have thought it troublesome to go to a place of worship; and you have known little or nothing of prayer. Think, I pray you, of these things. Be assured that willing ignorance is a state of sin. Not to love God—and not to desire the knowledge of His ways—is the very root of all sins.

Sins of omission are treated very lightly by unconverted persons:—yet they *are* sins, as truly as the most atrocious crimes. Judging only by what men think of us, we are more shocked by some of the actual sins which we commit:—but if we consider what is offensive to God, our sins of omission will no less fill our hearts with grief and self-condemnation. And O how numerous are they! Truly the whole life of an unconverted man is one continued sin of omission!

And what is the fruit of a life of carelessness? St. Paul says, it is unprofitable: "They are together

become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good; no, not one." It is a most melancholy sight, to see a whole neighbourhood unprofitable—doing no religious good; but, the contrary! Perhaps you may say, "But I do nobody any harm." Alas! how little do we think of all the harm we do! We do harm when we neglect doing good. We help to keep up the general irreligion. If we neglect the Bible and public worship, we encourage other ungodly men. Day after day men live on in carelessness, and never come nearer to God. This is not only sin, but it is sin of the very worst kind. I wish you felt it so. And if you have felt it, I wish you and I felt it still more.

St. Paul then describes several other kinds of sin; particularly, lying, swearing and cruelty. What common sins are these! Even very little children are soon guilty of lying; and grown-up people think it no harm to lie, when they want to hide a fault, or to gain an end. Many, also, are ready enough to cheat, if they can get their living by it. Yet, most certainly, lying and cheating are sins that will ruin the soul for ever. The devil is the father of lies; and all liars, without exception, unless they repent, will have their portion with him, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.—Swearing is also a very common sin. There are many persons who hardly ever utter a sentence without an oath.—Cruelty, too, is a far more common sin than many suspect. When you see little children tormenting flies, or when you see grown-up people cruel to their beasts, you forget, perhaps, that this is the very

temper of the devil. There are, indeed, few murderers; but how many are there, that rail and fight, and would kill—if they dared! Remember, "He that hateth his brother, is a murderer."

St. Paul then says—"Destruction and misery are in their ways." Oh, what wretchedness is produced by sin! Take the example of London, or any great town or village in the country: what drunkenness! what open profligacy! what sabbath-breaking! what tempting of one another to sin! what sinning with a high hand, working all uncleanness with greediness! what crowds attending play-houses, and fairs and shows!—How shocking to think, that many persons get their living, only by sin! Sin is their trade;—and a miserable livelihood it gives: they do not live out half their days: they waste and pine away, diseased and deserted; and, in a short time, come to death's door.

And now let me affectionately ask of you, "Is not sin the disease of *your* soul?" I would not touch the wound, if I did not know that it may be healed. But there is a Physician, our Blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ, who is able to heal the very worst. As many as come to Him with faith, shall be perfectly cured. Let me leave with you this short question, in His name—"Wilt thou be made whole?"

PRAYER.

O Lord, most holy, just and good: We bow down before thee, confessing ourselves to be vile earth, and miserable sinners. There is no soundness, there is no health in us.

O our God! when we look upon ourselves as we are in thy sight, we are constrained to lay our hand upon our mouth, and cry, Unclean, unclean! And wilt thou, O Lord, look upon such sinners? Wilt thou have pity upon dying worms, that have dared to rebel against thy holy will?

We do not presume to come before thee, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies in Christ Jesus. We come by that new and living way, which he hath prepared for us. For the sake of what he suffered on the cross, grant to us remission of sins that are past: accept us graciously, and love us freely. We would come in faith, nothing doubting. Let thy grace be magnified in our salvation, even as thy justice was displayed in freely delivering thy Son to die for our sins. We plead His righteousness—his alone. O cast us not away from thy presence: take not thy Holy Spirit from us. But bestow on us all grace: lead us into all truth: stir us up to work out our salvation with fear and trembling: make us to abound in every fruit of the Spirit; and evermore receive us in thy well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

IX.

SINNERS SILENCED BY THE LAW.

ROMANS iii. 19.

Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

THE JEWS had a law, given to them by God; and

they so trusted in it, as if the possession of it would save them, though they did not obey it.

The law—so far as it relates to holiness of heart and life—is binding upon all mankind, as much as on the Jews. This law shows us how holy God is. It points out to us what we *ought* to be: but, alas! at the same time it shows us what we *are*—unholy and sinful. It is like a light shining upon a black object; it shows how black it is. Thus the law of God discovers to sinners the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

Can we then expect, my friend, to be saved by our obedience to this law? *Have* we obeyed it? Can we be under it, and hope for salvation? Most surely not! But, lest you should be mistaking in this matter, let me explain to you, clearly, what the law *is*—and, what the law *does*—to those who trust to be saved by obeying it.

1. The law is *holy*. It was given by a holy God; and it is like him. It is not like a few general notions of goodness, such as ignorant, sinful men could put together. The more we study the will of God in the Bible, the more we shall find that his perfect holiness is far, very far, above our thoughts. We never should have had any true notion of holiness, if God had not revealed to us his own most blessed will.

Moreover, the law is *spiritual*. It pierces to the very thoughts and intents of the heart. Accordingly, Christ says, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." And St. John says, "He that hateth his brother, is a murderer."

The law of God is also *complete* in its demands: it makes no allowances. Those who trust to be saved by it, must prove that they have kept every part of it, throughout their whole lives, without one single failure: a thing impossible to prove!—Accordingly, St. James says, “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Thou shalt not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet, if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.”

Consider now, whether, on these terms, we can possibly hope to be saved by our own good works or obedience. Let us only ask ourselves these three short questions—“Am I holy?—holy in my inmost heart? have I been completely holy all my life?”

We cannot answer these questions, so as to justify ourselves. No; we must lay our hands upon our mouths, and cry out, Undone, undone!

2. Since the law is thus holy, spiritual and complete, you will now readily perceive what it *does* to those who are inclined to trust in it. It drives them back: it puts them far from hope, and sends them away with terror.

For—the law *convicts* us. It shows us what innumerable sins we have committed, in our youth, in our manhood; in our hearts, with our lips, in our lives; when we have been alone, and when in company; in our pleasures, and in our business; everywhere, and at all times. Our very prayers have had much sin mixed with them. Thus the law proves us to be sinful, vile, and lost.

The law *condemns* us also. It passes this sentence upon us—“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

And, sooner or later, the law will *silence* every sinner. Every mouth will be stopped. You will put away all vain excuses, when once you discover how holy the law is. Conscience will be compelled to plead “guilty” before the bar of God.

But “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” This is the blessed doctrine, to which we should gladly come. When we see that we cannot be saved by our own works or deservings, O how thankfully shall we welcome Jesus our Redeemer!

PRAYER.

O Lord God, most holy, just and true: thy law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good. But we are all as an unclean thing: and when thou risest up in judgment, we cannot answer thee to one charge in a thousand. We have sinned against thee, in thought, word, and deed. From our youth up, even until now, we have continually broken thy holy law.

Enter not into judgment with thy servants, O Lord; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. But accept us graciously, and love us freely, through the mediation of thy dear Son.

O let thy Holy Spirit write thy law upon our hearts, and cause us to love and obey it, though we cannot be justified by it. Being set free from sin,

may we be made the Lord's bondmen, and account his service perfect freedom. Let us serve thee with willing and glad hearts. And thus being delivered from wrath, may we at length stand before thy presence, without fear, at the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

X.

SALVATION, ONLY BY FAITH IN CHRIST.

ROMANS iii. 20—26.

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the Prophets;

Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

THE more we know of the holiness of God, the more we shall feel our own sinfulness. And the more we feel our own sinfulness, the more shall we see how helpless we are; altogether unable to save ourselves by any righteousness of our own.

Naturally, however, men know very little of the holiness of God. He has, therefore, given us a law, by which we may understand how holy He is. You know the law of the Ten Commandments.

Read, also, the Fifth Chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. There you will see, that the law of God looks at the heart, as well as our outward actions: the *thought* of foolishness is sin. Our Saviour tells us, that a wanton look has the guilt of adultery; and, that an angry revengeful thought is the spirit of murder. Who then can tell how oft he has offended? "There is none righteous; no, not one."

There is no difference among men in this matter: "all have sinned." Some, it is true, sin more grossly and openly than others; but who can see all the iniquity of his heart? Therefore it is very dangerous for us to please ourselves with the thought, that we are not quite so bad as others are. We should compare ourselves, not with one another, but with the holy Law of God. Then shall we be ready, every one of us, to cry out, "I am the chief of sinners!" We shall all feel that we have fallen short of the glory of God: for "by the Law is the knowledge of sin."

But, blessed be God! there is a way appointed, by which sinners may be reconciled, and received into favour with our Heavenly Father. This way (and it is the only way) is through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. The holy Redeemer has suffered for sinners, in order that they, vile and sinful as they are, may be accounted righteous through faith in Him. Our being thus accepted through Christ, is called, our Justification before God:—to obtain this Justification, we have only to accept it as a free gift. Christ has purchased the gift, and faith in Christ makes it ours. The power of Christ is put forth

to save us; and the power of faith must be put forth to receive Him. The sinner does not work out this righteousness: it is already wrought out for him by Christ. What we have to do in this matter, is, to receive it; believing that God has appointed it, and that Christ, by his merit, has earned it for us. Thus, by faith, we make it our own.

Can any thing be thought of, more wonderful than this—that a man should be saved, not for his own righteousness, but for the righteousness of another? Yet this is the doctrine of Scripture: this is the method of God's love, manifested through Christ. This is the mystery of grace: we are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

The righteousness, then, by which the believer is justified, is an imputed righteousness; not any goodness of his own. If a man had been never so strict and honest; if he were a good member of society; and very patient under all his sufferings—it is not all this that could justify him. We must not, for one moment, think of coming to God, trusting in any righteousness of our own. All must come alike, as sinners: all, without one exception. The most decent, and the most vile—all are alike in this.

Can any thing set forth the wisdom, the justice, and the mercy of God, more than this? Can any thing be thought of more difficult, than to find out a way by which God could pardon sinners, and yet show himself just? But, behold the way, prepared through Christ! The justice of God is satisfied,

because Jesus—perfect God and perfect Man—bears the punishment of our iniquities. And his mercy is displayed in pardoning us, accepting us, and treating us as if we were righteous, because we believe in Jesus. In Jesus he freely justifies the ungodly, when they turn to him with true repentance and lively faith.

Let me then ask, Whether you have understood this doctrine? and, still more earnestly, Whether you have taken this first great step in religion? Have you cast yourself on Christ for salvation? Have you accounted all your best deeds to be no better than filthy rags? Have you received this righteousness, which is "unto all, and upon all them that believe?"—We must come to God, with this on our lips and in our hearts—"I am a lost sinner; but I believe that, for me, Christ died: I accept his mercy, and trust in his blood." Whoever can say this from his heart, with a faith which worketh by love, is saved through grace. "But he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

But, if you have learned truly to believe in Christ, you will never desire to continue in sin. On the contrary, you will hate the sins which crucified your Lord and Master. Love to Jesus will cast out the love of sin. Though, for salvation, you will put no trust in any thing you can do, still you will take this for the law of your life—"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

God grant to us this saving faith; and with it, the love of holiness, and a well-grounded hope of glory!

PRAYER.

O Lord, and Heavenly Father, from Thee cometh down every good and perfect gift. Thine was the gift of thy dear Son, to be the propitiation for our sins: thine, also, is the gift of a saving faith, whereby we may be enabled to apprehend thy Son, our Saviour. Since thou hast revealed him to us, as the Lord our Righteousness, make us to be no longer faithless, but believing. We would clothe ourselves with this white raiment, which thou hast freely offered us, to cover the shame and defilement of our guilty souls. Let thy Holy Spirit work in us the work of faith, with power; that we may behold our innumerable sins laid on Jesus; and all the merit of his precious blood-shedding accounted to us; that, as He died for us, so we may live through Him.

And now unto thee, O Father, who didst freely give up thy Son for us all; and to thee, Blessed Redeemer, who didst pour out thy soul unto death, and ever livest to make intercession for transgressors; and to thee, most Holy Spirit, who dost begin in thy people the good work, and dost seal them unto the day of redemption; to Thee, thou glorious Jehovah, three Persons in one God, we ascribe all glory and praise, now and for ever. Amen.

XI.

THE LAW ESTABLISHED BY FAITH.

ROMANS iii. 31.

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

It is a glorious doctrine, worthy of all acceptance, that we are justified freely, through faith in Christ Jesus. This blessed truth has been the comfort of thousands. Sinners ready to perish have come to Jesus, and obtained eternal salvation through him.

Still, there have been many in all ages, who have objected to this doctrine of salvation by faith only. They suppose that it must lead to careless living, and so "make void the law." Let me clearly state the objections, and the answer to each of them.

Some may perhaps object—"This doctrine sets all men on a level: the best and the worst seem to have but one and the same way." My friend, there is truth in this. The fact is, that all *are* on this one level: "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." What we call the best men—(and certainly some men are, in various respects, better than others)—these best men, even the *very* best, when they understand the holiness of the law of God, will be humbled, as sincerely as the vilest. St. Paul before his conversion was, in some respects, one of the best of men; but after his conversion he knew, and confessed, that he was the chief of sinners.

But perhaps some may tell you, that this being saved by faith is far too easy a way—that faith is but the turn of a thought—and thus, in a moment, a

God grant to us this saving faith; and with it, the love of holiness, and a well-grounded hope of glory!

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But perhaps some may tell you, that this being saved by faith is far too easy a way—that faith is but the turn of a thought—and thus, in a moment, a

man may have all his sins pardoned, and be accepted of God. Indeed, my friend, if you are thinking thus, let me assure you, that faith is no such easy matter as you seem to suppose; it is not the mere "turn of a thought": it is the act of a heart totally changed; and such a heart is itself the gift of God. He who really believes to the saving of his soul, knows that faith is a precious jewel, such as he never could have gained by himself alone: God gave it him.

Possibly, however, you may be thinking, when once you have faith, then all is well; you have only to believe again, and again, and you will be pardoned and justified every time. But this is a fatal abuse of the doctrine of faith. Beware, my friend, lest you fall into some dangerous error in this matter. Some have deceived themselves so far, as to think that they might live as carelessly as they pleased; and yet have faith, and so be saved. Nay, some have gone even so far as to think that the worse they grew, the more Christ would be glorified by their salvation: and thus they have gone on sinning without remorse, and yet hoping that they were Christ's. Such faith is not a Scriptural faith: it is damnable presumption.

How can you tell that you have faith, unless you have those things which accompany faith? Perhaps you ask, What *are* those things? I will mention five: you can examine yourself by them.—First, Have you a *knowledge* of the holy law of God? Next, have you a *love* for holiness? Thirdly, Do you make it your constant *prayer* that you may be

holy? Fourthly, Are you filled with *godly sorrow*, when you fall into sin? Lastly, Is your hope of heaven, a *holy hope*: does it arise from delight in the thought, that you shall there see God, and be like him in holiness?

These things accompany true faith; and they certainly do not make void the law.—Thus, faith establishes the law. For if you have true faith, you have at least the beginning of all these. They may be very weak and imperfect in you, for a while: but—they are begun! And they are all sweetly mingled with the love of Christ. Knowledge; love; prayer; godly sorrow, and holy hope—think on these things!

PRAYER.

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, who dost of thine own free mercy give eternal life to all them that believe in thy Son, Jesus Christ: Enable us, we beseech thee, to believe in him to the saving of our souls. And for the great love wherewith thou hast loved us, teach us to love Thee, and thy holy will, above all things. Let us account none of thy commandments grievous, but serve thee with gladness, not from fear, but from love.

O Thou who hast made known to us thine own way of accepting and justifying the ungodly, suffer us not to abuse thy mercy, or to make the grace of God an occasion of sin. Rather, O Lord, having had much forgiven, may we love much, and strive the more earnestly to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. Thou hast promised to give to them that ask, a new heart and a right spirit: O take

away from us the heart of stone, and give us an heart of flesh. Let the Spirit of holiness dwell and reign within us; quickening us to add to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. May these things be in us, and abound. May we look forward with longing desires to our rest in heaven, where the Saints are perfected in thy blessed image, and ascribe salvation to thee, our God, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen.

XII.

THE BLESSINGS OF FAITH.

ROMANS V. 1—5.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Who can sum up all the blessings, which flow from a lively faith? They are so many and great, that all our days on earth are not sufficient to count or to measure them. But if we are true believers, we shall delight in speaking of these blessings one by one, though we never can worthily describe them.

1. Faith is the means of our Justification; for by faith we, unworthy sinners, lay hold of the worthiness of Christ Jesus, and through him righteousness is imputed to us. Not that our faith is itself worthy; but it leads us to Him who is worthy. Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to redeem us unto God by his blood!

2. Faith brings with it Peace; because through it we are reconciled unto God. We are at one with him: there is no more enmity, and no more fear. We dwell in his family, as dear children.—According to the measure of our faith, will be the measure of our peace. But oh, who can tell the value of even the lowest degree of a believer's peace? It is a peace "which passeth all understanding."

3. By continual faith we have also continual access unto God. We have boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus. We may freely make our requests known unto God. We are invited to come boldly at all times unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need.

4. Faith enables us to rejoice, both in present grace, and likewise in the hope of future glory. The grace of God here, and the glory of God hereafter—this is the believer's plenteous portion. Is not this matter of joy? Can any delight, any treasure, be compared to this?

5. Faith triumphs even in Tribulations. In the midst of the deepest afflictions, it is enough to know that our soul is safe in the hands of Christ. Still more—what a blessing is it, to know that sanctified

afflictions are the means of purifying the soul, and of bringing us still nearer and nearer to Christ himself!—Now, this is the case with the believer in a variety of ways: for mark how the Apostle goes on with the description of his state.

6. Tribulation worketh Patience. This also is through faith. Without faith in Christ, afflicted persons would soon grow fretful, and even angry with God. They are impatient, heavy, and dispirited. But by faith, they become submissive, contented, thankful, and humbly patient. Blessed fruit of faith! Faith is a quieting grace.

7. Again: Patience worketh Experience. When patience has its perfect work, a believer is enabled, in due time, to understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. Many of the mercies of God we never should know, if we had not experience and patience. How wonderfully does a believer feel himself delivered out of trouble after trouble: like a ship mounting over, first one wave, then another, and reaching the haven safe at last.

8. Thus, also, Experience worketh Hope. He who has been helped and delivered once, hopes to be delivered again: and he who has been dealt with graciously a thousand times, may hope for fresh mercies a thousand times ten thousand more: yea, he should hope, even to the end. "It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait, for the salvation of the Lord."

9. And, this hope maketh not ashamed. No earthly hope is lasting and secure, as this is. We have it as an anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast. What

makes it stedfast is, the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. This love is an earnest of heaven. It is the fruit, and it is the strengthener, of faith. What a gift to our 'cold hard hearts! Who but the Holy Ghost *could* warm and melt such hearts as ours, and cheer them with the glow of love?

Thus, my friend, I have laid before you, as it were, a set of precious jewels. We obtain them by faith in Jesus Christ. As the Apostle pours them forth before our view, each one seems more rich and desirable than the former:—from peace, we go on to joy; from joy, even to glorying. Let me name them all, once more:—Justification; peace; liberty of approach to God; joy; triumph in sanctified afflictions; patience; experience; hope; love.

PRAYER.

O Thou God of all grace: What tongue can utter, or what heart conceive the great things, which Thou hast prepared for them that trust in thee! Merciful Lord, lead us by a living faith to Christ; that we may be pardoned and justified through His atoning blood and righteousness; and that, believing, we may have life and peace through his death.

We desire to put ourselves, O Lord, under the guidance of thy good providence, as thy reconciled children in Christ Jesus. Whatever may befall us, teach us to receive it as coming to us from a Father's hand. Enable us cheerfully to do and to suffer all the will of God. Shed abroad thy love in our hearts, by the power of the Holy Ghost. Let us find comfort in coming to thy throne of grace.

And thus, Heavenly Father, lead us on from strength to strength, till we at length appear before Thee in glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XIII.

FREE GRACE, LEADING TO HOLINESS.

ROMANS vi. 1—6.

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

MEN, who do not understand the doctrine of Justification by faith, or, in other words, the doctrine of free grace, are very ready to make objections against it. St. Paul met with such objectors, and found it very necessary to answer them. But, before we consider what he said to them, let us look again into the doctrine itself.

The doctrine is clearly laid down by St. Paul in the fourth chapter of this Epistle, from the fourth verse to the eighth: he says, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that

justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works; saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

Here the Apostle refers particularly to that false method, which man in his ignorance would think the right way to be saved; namely, That if a person tries to do his best, God will accept his endeavours and his works, as far as they go, and make allowance for all that is wanting.

Now, the danger of this notion is great; for it opposes God's plan, and is totally unfit for mankind. There are none, who do good works worthy of salvation. All are sinners before God. Who then can, by his good deeds, merit heaven?

Look again at those words of St. Paul: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Now this is the doctrine at which men stumble. "How is this?" say they: "shall a man who worketh *not*, have a better chance of salvation than a man who *works*? Will God justify the ungodly for their faith, and not accept the few good works that another poor creature tries to do? At this rate, Faith is every thing, and Works are nothing!"

To all this, let me answer: "You have well said, that faith is every thing, and works are nothing." But mind, in what sense this is said. It is, in the matter of our *acceptance* before God. We are

accepted through faith in Christ, because faith receives and honours Christ. Faith joyfully confesses that Christ, by his precious blood-shedding, has obtained the pardon of all our sins, and reconciliation with God. Both St. Paul and St. James agree in the necessity of good works, springing from faith: but the justification of the ungodly does not spring from any worthiness, either in their faith or in their works: all comes from Christ, of whom faith lays fast hold. The humbled believer thankfully accepts the righteousness of Christ: that righteousness covers him, and hides all his sins. So then, in the matter of our justification, faith is every thing; while good works follow, flowing from this living faith.

Think you, then, that the believer in Jesus is an idler? Just the contrary. His faith "worketh by love." If he had a faith without works, it would be a dead faith, good for nothing. But he desires to "abound in every good word and work." Only he now works, not for wages, but from love.

We sometimes hear it objected, "Oh then, if only we have faith, we may live as we please." In St. Paul's days the same objection was made. Foolish and bad men said, "Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound." The moment St. Paul hears this, he cries out, with holy anger—God forbid! It *cannot* be—it *must not* be. "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" To think of allowing sin, would ruin man, and dishonour God. Know ye not that true believers are one with Christ; and that, as Christ rose from the dead, so do they arise from their former sinful living?

Think then, first, Whether you have saving faith in Christ; and next, Whether you bring forth the fruit of good works, from love to Him.—Faith, and works, must both be in you, if you would be saved. Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good. If you love this Saviour, show your love, by bearing the cross with Him. Crucify the old man. You know what the old man is: it is your old Self, your former Self: but when any one savingly believes, the change is known by this—He puts on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.

PRAYER.

O God, who hast reconciled us unto thyself by the precious blood of thy dear Son; we would thankfully acknowledge that we are not our own: we are bought with a price. We are bound by all thy commands, and yet more by the gracious terms of thy Covenant, to present ourselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto thee, through Jesus Christ.

Let thy Holy Spirit, Lord, write on our minds the law of love, that we may with our whole hearts keep thy commandments, and delight to do thy will. As we have yielded our members as instruments of sin, so now may they be made instruments of holiness, unto thee, our God. By the purifying grace of thy Spirit, mortify in us all carnal affections: fill us with holy resolutions; and effectually enable us to fulfil our vows unto thee. Let love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, with every other fruit of thy Spirit, abound

in our life and conversation. And thus prepare us, O Lord, for the everlasting enjoyment of thy Blessed Self in heaven above, through the merits of our only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ. Amen.

XIV.

THE WAGES OF SIN; AND THE GIFT OF GOD.

ROMANS VI. 21—23.

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

HAVE you ever considered, my friend, the sad state of careless sinners? or the blessedness of our being made free from sin, and becoming servants to God? Suffer me to speak a little with you on this subject: and oh that God, by his Spirit, may dispose us to shun the path of death, and to walk in the way everlasting!

1. The case of an impenitent sinner is seen both in his *work*, and in his *wages*.

His work is sin. It never is otherwise with him: for his very nature is sinful. His heart is a corrupt fountain: and what else can proceed out of it, but evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds? Have you thought of these things, my friend? have you honestly looked into your heart and life, by the light of God's law?

Then—remember, what is the recompence that

* must follow a life of carelessness and ungodliness. The Bible plainly says, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." As is the work, so are the wages. When the workman has finished his labour, *he* looks forward to his wages with *pleasure*; but oh the wretchedness of the sinner! he can have no joy in looking forward to the end of his work on earth. Sin may be pleasant for a little time; but it is bitterer than wormwood in the end.

O think of this—that while the ungodly are mad on their lusts, and multiplying their sins, their wages are all the time increasing. They are willingly serving the devil. He cheats them with fair promises: he is willing enough that they should make a jest of him here; but hereafter he will repay all their folly with many stripes. They will be delivered over unto the tormentors!

What fruit then have we from our past sins? Does not the thought of them make us ashamed? does it not make us afraid?

2. But now let us meditate on the love of Christ, in redeeming sinners from this dreadful state! Behold all the blessings of salvation fully and freely offered in Christ Jesus!

The offer is full: it is nothing less than "eternal life." Believe in Christ, and the curse of sin is taken away. Believe in Christ, and he will give you a new heart, so that sin shall not have dominion over you. Live a life of faith in him, and you are safe for eternity. You shall live with Jesus for ever! So full are the promises of grace!

And these promises are also free. The grace of God is altogether a free gift. The Father freely gave his Son to die for us: the Son freely poured out his soul unto death for our redemption: the Holy Spirit freely imparts grace. They who receive his grace, joyfully acknowledge that all is gift, from first to last.

Examine then, my friend, which of these two you are; or, at least, which you desire to be—A sinner, working for the wages of death: or, A believer, living unto God, through Jesus Christ.

PRAYER.

O Lord, whose Blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the Devil: For his sake, we beseech Thee, deliver us from sin and from eternal death. O let thy Holy Spirit work mightily within us, that we may be enabled to cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light. Without thine aid, we have no power to help ourselves. To Thee, O Heavenly Father, and to thy Blessed Son and the Holy Ghost the Comforter, we look for the gift of eternal life. Pardon our sins. Subdue and mortify our corruptions: and lead us in the way everlasting. And to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost we will ascribe all the glory of our salvation, now and for ever. Amen.

XV.

GODLY SHAME.

ROMANS vi. 21—23. (*Continued*) See page 54.

WHEN, on another occasion, we were reading this passage, we did not particularly notice the former part of the twenty-first verse: "What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" It describes the altered view which a converted man takes of his past life. A few remarks may help us to right feelings on this subject.

1. Observe then, on the one hand, how St. Paul reminds us of the bitter fruits which sin was once bringing forth in us. It is a very humbling recollection to a converted man: but let any one look back, and examine the past, faithfully. Consider, how much of our time has gone to waste;—time, which might have been employed in learning wisdom and in doing good. How often have we spent money on what was trifling, or sinful;—money, which might have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, or helped forward the cause of the Gospel. Perhaps our health has suffered from our crimes and vices;—health, which might have held out long, in useful services to our friends, or to mankind at large. Or we may have injured our friends, our very best friends, whom we might have pleased and profited by kind and prudent conduct. And, if we have been tempters to others, leading *them* onward to sin and ruin, what a bitter thought is that!

Above all, let us reflect that we were all the time displeasing our Heavenly Father, and strengthening

the hands of his enemies. What madness, what perdition! Destruction and misery were in our way.

Let us cast up the account. It tells grievously against us: but it is best to judge ourselves, that we may not be condemned of the Lord.

2. Yet reflect, on the other hand, that, if we are truly converted to God, the yoke of sin is now broken. Blessed be God! sin shall no more have dominion over us. Mark that touching expression—"Ye are now *ashamed!*" Yes, a true convert is ashamed; and it is a good sign that he is so. He remembers the past: and blushes, sighs and mourns. He looks back, and condemns himself, in some such language as this:—

—Oh how *could* I be so thoughtless, while constantly in danger of being cast into hell-fire!

—How could I go on, provoking that gracious Father, who might justly have punished me, times without number, and who yet forbore to strike the rebel dead!

—How could I make myself so vile, when Jesus was all the time offering to pardon the past, and to cleanse and renew my polluted soul!

—How could I so grieve the Spirit of God, whose gentle voice (as I can now remember) often pleaded thus: "Open the door of thine heart, O thou unhappy sinner, wearied in the greatness of thy sins!"

—How could I hold out so long! How many were mourning for me, while I was too hard to mourn for myself!

—And now that grace has conquered, my wonder is, how any one else can continue unconverted!

Yet, alas! why did I not sooner wonder at myself, and turn? How can I ever be thankful enough, or devoted enough?

My friend, godly shame is very humbling, yet it has comfort in it. It stirs us up to bring forth "fruit unto holiness."—Henceforth let us aim at giving glory to God our Saviour. Let us adorn the Gospel, and abound in usefulness towards all men. Let us delight ourselves in the consolations of Christ, and in the fellowship of the Spirit. Surely this is a change to be desired above all things. Here is Peace, Content, Happiness, Hope: formerly, all was Folly, and Sin, and Shame. Let us break away from the service of Satan! Oh that we felt more deeply, what a good and kind Master is Jesus!

PRAYER.

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, we adore thee for thy goodness, thy forbearance, and long-suffering towards us, during all the time that we spent in folly, and rebellion against thee. Hadst thou dealt with us according to our sins, we had long ago been shut up in outer darkness, with the devil and his angels. But thou hast spared us, that we might repent, and turn, and live.

Gracious Father, fill us with a holy shame and indignation against ourselves, at the remembrance of our many and great iniquities. And dispose us now, by thy Holy Spirit, to seek for pardon, peace, and holiness. Other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us; but we desire now to live to thine honour. And as our glorying hath formerly

been in that which was our shame; so let all our glorying henceforth be in thy free salvation, and in the transforming work of thy Spirit, the Sanctifier and Comforter of thy people.

Now to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

XVI. IN-DWELLING SIN.

ROMANS vii. 21—25.

I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

WHAT was it, that caused such a bitter cry to burst from the lips of this blessed Apostle? And what is it that causes like grief to every true believer in Jesus? It is this:—a feeling within him, that sin strives so hard for the mastery.

While a man remains carnally-minded, he knows nothing of this grief. He may, indeed, know something concerning his faults; and he may, in a certain way, be sorry for them. But an unconverted man does not really love holiness, and does not really hate sin. Hence, there is no real struggle in his

heart. He may have many troublesome convictions, and some vehement wishes that he were better. Perhaps he may know just enough of Religion to make him miserable, but not enough to make him happy. He has not fully given up himself to be saved, governed, and comforted by the grace of God.

How different is the case of a spiritually-minded man! Let me set his character before you, my friend, that you may examine whether it be yours.

A spiritual man knows the law of God. He knows that it is holy, and just, and good: and he loves it, because it is holy; even while it shows him his own vileness.

With good will, and with full purpose of heart, he "consents to the law." He "*would* do good." "To will is present" with him. The service of God is the decided choice of his inmost soul: and, having thus devoted himself to holiness, he longs to bring every thought into a holy state. His rule is, to abound "in all holy conversation, and godliness." This he desires out of love to Christ, "who hath loved him, and washed him from his sins in his own blood."

But, alas! the very striving to be holy, causes the "old man" within to struggle the more violently. Mark how the Apostle words it. "I find then a law"—(that is, I find such to be the corrupt way of my old heart)—"that when I would do good,"—(and this desire is a proof of a new heart)—yet, "evil is present with me." Sin is close at my side—lying in wait—ready to spring on me, and take me captive.

A few examples will show this to be true.—Some-

times, Conscience says, "Here is a certain duty, which you ought to perform:" then the "old man" within begins to raise some objections: we listen, we yield, and leave undone what we know we ought to have done.—At another time, temptation to sin approaches us: in our conscience we cannot but say, "How shall I do this great wickedness?" Yet the weak, corrupt heart shamefully begins to incline towards the sin, and to make some idle excuse; such as—"I can't help it." And in this way, pride, and evil concupiscence, and anger, and covetousness—yea, sinful thoughts of every kind—are perpetually besetting us, and stirring up our corruptions. We had hoped they were dead; but they stir again, and shew signs of life.

Even when we desire to pray, and actually begin praying in secret, and when our souls seem to be on the wing heavenward, how often do we find our corruptions way-laying us, and dragging us down once more to earthly vanities—perhaps, even to sin!

A believer can truly say with the Apostle, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." But the more this inward man is renewed, so much the more does the old man within us war and rage. Satan cannot bear to lose a single slave: and therefore, as soon as any one is made free by Christ, the great enemy strives to the utmost to entangle him again, by means of his old corruptions.

This is a dreadful warfare: and it is a warfare which will continue, even till death. A believer, knowing that there is such an enemy without, and feeling that there is such an enemy within, must

needs cry out, "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?"

My friend, I have spoken to you at some length on this subject; but, if you have truly entered Christ's service, you already know something of these spiritual battles. Let us take courage. Thanks be to God, Christ giveth us the victory! If we abide in him, though these corruptions may *dwell* in us, yet they shall not *reign*. "Sin shall not have dominion over us." If grace has begun the good work, grace will carry it on: and grace shall overcome at the last.

PRAYER.

O God, thou knowest our foolishness, and our faults are not hid from thee. We bewail ourselves before thee, feeling how grievously the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, so that we cannot do the things that we would.

Forgive, O Lord, our many sins, negligences, and ignorances. Pardon the iniquity that is mingled with our best services. And when thou art pacified toward us, still cause us to walk humbly with thee, and to remember our utter unworthiness in thy sight.

Heavenly Father, we pray thee to have compassion upon our infirmities. Make us afraid of sin: preserve in us a constant watchfulness over our own hearts, and cause us to rely only on the help of thy Spirit. Keep back thy servants also from presumptuous sins: let them not have dominion over us. O let our souls be closely united to Christ, our living Head, that through Him may we go forth conquering and to conquer. Succour us when we are

tempted: strengthen us when we are weary: raise us when falling: and finally beat down Satan under our feet, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XVII

FREEDOM FROM CONDEMNATION.

ROMANS viii. 1.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

WHAT is it to be "in Christ Jesus?" You cannot, my friend, have a more weighty question to consider.

It is not, merely to profess and call ourselves Christians: but it is, to be so united to Christ by a living faith, as that He may dwell in us, and we in Him.

Our Lord has himself compared this union of himself with his disciples, to that which exists between a vine and its branches. He says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." This union is a living union of each with the other. Our being in Christ, cannot be separated from His being in us. Therefore he says, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

Therefore *our being in Christ* cannot be separated from *his dwelling in us*. He, on his part, dwells in believers by the gift of his Spirit, filling their souls:

—they, on their part, are in Him, inasmuch as they cling to Him and abide in Him, by a living faith.

The proof of this union is its fruit—which is, holiness. If we are thus in Christ Jesus, we shall, by his grace, strive to be holy, even as he is holy. "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he also walked"—no longer walking "after the flesh!" "They who are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." They walk in the Spirit, and do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Our old man is crucified with Christ, if we be truly his. For "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

But what I desire especially to show you at this time, is—that if you are thus in Christ Jesus, walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; then "there is no condemnation" to you. Your past sins are forgiven you, for His Name's sake. The curse of the broken law no longer lies upon you. You are pardoned; you are accepted; you are justified freely through his grace.

Moreover, through Jesus you have access continually by faith into that grace, wherein alone you can stand. For what are we to do with our daily sins? We cannot excuse them: we cannot atone for them: therefore—we must take them all to Christ, confessing, bewailing, and forsaking them. Our warfare against sin is a very painful state: but it is not a state of condemnation: for we may come daily and hourly to have our consciences sprinkled with the blood of Jesus. Blessed be God! "if any man sin

we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins."

My friend, this daily coming to Jesus must make us love Him above all things. Having much forgiven, we shall love much. Our repeated prayers for pardon will keep the conscience tender: and this will lead us to abound more and more in holiness. Thus at length we shall stand before our Redeemer, without spot and blameless, at the great day of Judgment.

PRAYER.

O Lord our Heavenly Father, who hast called us to the hope of salvation through thy Son Jesus Christ: We beseech thee to endue us with a living faith in Him; that we who were by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and children of wrath, may be justified and accepted through His merits, and made thy children through grace.

Day by day lead and uphold us by thy Holy Spirit, that we may no longer serve the flesh, but may walk before thee as dear children. Breathe into us the spirit of holiness: renew thine image in our hearts, and write thy law upon our minds. Give to us one heart and one way, that we may fear thee for our good always. Stablish us, that we may never depart from thy covenant. Pardon our daily sins, and deal graciously with thy servants, according to the multitude of thy mercies, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XVIII.

THE CARNAL MIND.

ROMANS viii. 5—8.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

You must have heard, my friend, very often, that there is a difference between the righteous and the wicked: but in these words of St. Paul, that difference is described in a new and remarkable manner. He speaks of a carnal mind, and of a spiritual mind. May the Holy Spirit of God assist us in understanding his words: and let us search our own hearts, to know whether we be carnally minded, or spiritually minded!

Connected with this subject, we find in St. Paul's Epistles several expressions signifying the same thing; such as, "following after the flesh"; "the carnal mind"; "the natural man"; "the old man." All these expressions mean one and the same thing. They denote that sinful nature with which we are born into the world. And the words—"the spiritual mind," "the new man"—signify what we become, when grace has renewed our hearts and lives.

Of carnal persons, St. Paul says, that they mind the things of the flesh. If you are still living according to the flesh, you may know this to be the case not only by your following fleshly pleasures, but by

your fondness for the things of this world in general, and for whatever gratifies the natural heart. You know of nothing better. You would be content to have your portion in this life. Ungodly men think themselves happy if they have plenty of earthly goods, and no religion to trouble them. This is what they really feel, and what they sometimes actually say. They live, and they wish to live, "without God in the world."

Observe—this their "carnal mind is enmity against God." They hate piety, and dislike pious people. They think serious Religion is all melancholy. They dislike Prayer: the most they can do, is, now and then to say a prayer, or hear prayers read by others—the shorter (they think) the better:—though, if the prayers be long, then they think they have done God so much the greater service. A sermon is very tiresome to them. They have no taste, no relish, for holiness.

Especially, when we speak more closely, and invite them to come to Christ and cast away their sins, we seem to them the most troublesome people in the world. The conversation of a godly Minister, however short or courteous, provokes and annoys them. A reproof, however gently given, they consider as an affront. As to pious conversation, they call it cant. The Gospel seems to them foolishness. When told that faith alone can save us, they answer, that they have a wiser method—namely, to be as good as they can, and leave God's mercy to make up what is wanting. Alas, alas! how do they rage against the Gospel, when told that they must eternally perish, unless

they obtain from Christ a broken heart, a believing heart, and a truly obedient heart.

My friend, whosoever is in this state, is in a state of death: "for to be carnally minded is death."

Examine therefore, seriously, how *your* soul appears before God. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Their whole state of heart is displeasing to Him, because they are, in truth, alienated from Him. Nay more—the very prayers which they say, displease Him; for they are only a form. Some unconverted persons are very strict and moral: still their heart is far from God. Others trifle with Religion, till they are sick, or in affliction, or afraid of death, and then just try to pray a little, because they think it is safest to do so: but this is not the prayer of love—not the prayer of faith!

If you, my friend, feel conscious that you are far from God, let me remind you of one thing more: the carnal mind cannot change itself. It is naturally a rebel. "It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The Lord alone can renew you.—But what I have to say further on this subject is so important, that I must visit you again, if you are not able to hear it now.

PRAYER.

O Lord God, who art a Spirit, and wilt have them that worship Thee to worship in spirit and truth; We beseech thee to deliver us from the carnal and earthly mind, which is enmity against Thee; and to bestow on us that spiritual mind, which is life and peace. Suffer us not to live any more after the course

of this world, after the lusts of the flesh, and the desires of our own evil hearts : but enable us, by thy Spirit, to know thy holy will, and to do that which is pleasing in thy sight. Let our delight be in thy law ; and cause us to mourn for sin, as our heaviest grief and burden. Pardon our iniquity, for it is great. Incline our hearts unto thy testimonies, and enable us to keep them, even unto the end, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

XIX.

THE SPIRITUAL MIND.

ROMANS viii. 9—13.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin ; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die : but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

LET me converse with you further, my friend, on this very important subject—the difference between being carnally minded, and being spiritually minded.

I showed you, in several respects, how utterly the carnal mind is opposed to godliness ;—in fact, that it “is enmity against God.”

Now, the spiritual mind is just the opposite of all this. They who are spiritually minded, “mind the

things of the Spirit.” They delight in the law of God : they love holiness, and they pray to be made holy. Every thing that comes from God, they are thankful for : even for affliction ; because affliction brings them nearer to him. Often, it is affliction that first leads the sinner to seek after God. He hears those tender words of Christ, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Hearing the gracious invitation, he arises, leaves his sins, and comes to his Saviour. Then he takes upon him that yoke which is easy, and that burden which is light. He finds pardon through the blood of Jesus : and a new heart is given to him, by the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

They who have received pardon, and a new heart, owe a great debt of love and gratitude to God. They are bound to die unto sin, and live unto holiness. Indeed, our new nature is proved by this ; just as the tree is known by its fruits. They who have the Spirit, walk according to the Spirit. And “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

If you, my friend, desire thus to live, no doubt you will soon feel that it is a very great work. It is so : far too hard for you to perform of yourself. To mortify the deeds of the body, and crucify the old man, is a work hard to begin, hard to continue, and hard to carry on to the end of life. But, here is our comfort—the mighty Spirit of God is promised to us. He that raised up Jesus from the dead, is able also to raise us from the death of sin : yea, he is willing to abide and to rule in our hearts.

Prayer is, therefore, our plain duty. Pray for the Spirit of Christ; and open the door of your heart, that He may enter and dwell there. Give him your whole heart, that he may reign there. Christ is willing: be you willing. Pray for faith: and pray constantly that the Holy Spirit would increase your faith.

Thus shall you find life and peace. Fighting against sin is indeed a distressing work: but yielding to sin is far more terrible; it is the way to death eternal. Therefore fight on: mortify sin, by the power of Christ: aim at perfecting holiness in the fear of God: so shall you have peace of conscience; yea, you shall have that peace of God which passeth all understanding. And when life is ended, you will be enabled to say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Farewell for ever, sin and sorrow: welcome the perfect holiness of Heaven!

PRAYER.

O Lord, who through thy Son Jesus Christ hast promised to us the pardon of all our sins, and called us to serve thee in newness of life; Bestow upon us, thine unworthy servants, wisdom and grace to apprehend the things which are freely given unto us of thee. Make us thine, not in word only, but in deed and in truth. Graft in our hearts the love of thy name, and water us continually with the dew of thy Spirit; that being dead indeed unto sin, and new-created unto holiness, we may bring forth the fruits of righteousness. We ask these mercies through the intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ:

to whom, with thyself, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

XX.

THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION.

ROMANS viii. 14—18.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

TRUE Christians are those who are led by the Spirit of God; and none else. The Spirit of God leads us by the light of the word of God; that is, by the Bible. He works on the hearts of those who pray, enabling them to know, love, and obey the will of God. He leads *from* sin, *to* holiness. He leads into all truth.

Do you desire, then, to know whether you are a true Christian? Ask yourself these questions—"Do I study the Bible? Do I seek the gift of the Spirit by prayer? and, do I give up my heart to be led by the Spirit?" Great indeed are the privileges of those who are led by the Spirit. They are the sons of God: heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ. They receive, therefore, the spirit of Adoption: they

feel, and act, as children of the Most High. Let me set before you some chief marks of this childlike spirit, the spirit of Adoption.

1. One mark is, liberty of spirit: the heart is freed from slavish fear. While we remain ignorant of Christ, we can only think of God with terror. We have indeed just cause to dread his wrath. But this state is called "the spirit of bondage." We are like slaves: or rather, we are prisoners under sentence of death, every hour expecting to be led out to execution. But when we believe that the curse of the law is taken away, Christ having been made a curse for us, we then feel ourselves set free. Instead of dreading the presence of God, we may now come boldly unto the throne of grace. Instead of crying out, "O thou angry Judge!" we may draw nigh unto God with prayers and praises, saying, Abba, Father. This is a spirit of liberty.

2. Another mark of a childlike spirit is, Affection. "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." And then, "we love Him, because he first loved us." True-hearted children love their father.

3. Another mark is, Obedience. "Whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself; and that Wicked One toucheth him not." The son is like his Father.

4. The Apostle adds, that "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." This he does by inward holy consolations. If we are truly led by the Spirit, we ought to desire and to expect the consolations He has promised. He will not disappoint us. He will not

withhold the joys of his presence. He is the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. He will, in his own good time, impart to us the comfort of knowing that God is our Father and our Friend.

And what is this witness? It is—not mere feeling, but—the manifestation of the *work* of the Holy Ghost in a believer's heart. If the Spirit has wrought in you the work of faith, love, and obedience, you have in that work an evidence, clear as the sun, that you are one of the children of God. The Holy Ghost witnesses to us, according as he works in us.

O my friend, think of the blessedness of this state! While you are being made meet for heaven, rejoice in the prospect of it. "God hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace." Let this comfort your heart, and stablish you in every good word and work.

You are heir to a kingdom. You may suffer with Christ here: but you shall reign with him in glory hereafter. And what are all the sufferings of this life, to a man who expects, in a little time, to enter into the kingdom of heaven? What is sickness and pain; what is poverty, and want; what is distress, and persecution, if you have Christ dwelling in your heart? Look upon your afflictions as so many steps to glory. Not that we deserve heaven for our sufferings: no, not even for our patience. No, truly: all is the free gift of Christ. But there is a thought, which makes a lively believer more than patient—it makes him even joyful—the thought that God is his loving Father; and that, after death, heavenly glory shall be his portion, for ever and ever!

PRAYER.

O Lord, who, for the great love wherewith thou hast loved us, hast called us to enter the Christian family, and to become living members of the household of faith: Send forth the Spirit of thy Son into our hearts, enabling us to cry unto thee, Abba, Father. We are indeed utterly unworthy of thy favour: but Thou thyself hast bid us come unto thy gracious presence. O hide thy face from our sins, and blot out all our iniquities. Pardon us for thy dear Son's sake; grant unto us the joy of thy salvation, and uphold us by thy free Spirit. Let us no longer be separated from thee by sin. Deliver us from the power of our corruptions: take away the bondage of fear, and make us continually to enjoy the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

Seeing we have this hope, enable us, O Lord, to purify ourselves even as Thou art pure. Strengthen us, that we may set our affections on things above. And when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, may we also appear with him in glory, for the same Jesus Christ's sake, our only Lord and Saviour. Amen.

XXI.

THE SPIRIT HELPING OUR INFIRMITIES.

ROMANS viii. 26, 27.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

ONE certain mark of conversion is, the constant love and practice of Prayer. But they who pray the most spiritually, know that it is often very difficult to worship God in spirit and truth. The children of God perceive their natural depravity, weakness, and ignorance, more in their prayers than in any thing else. At that place where they most of all desire to be, and to abide—namely, near the throne of grace—there they often feel themselves the most forlorn and helpless: so much so, that, if they had not a compassionate Mediator and a supporting Spirit, they would be ready to sink into despair.

True Prayer flows from the heart. Mark these four things, which are necessary to effectual Prayer:—We must *know* what it is that we want:—we must earnestly *desire* what we ask for:—we must *believe* in God's willingness to answer our petitions:—and we must pray, *without ceasing*, in order that the blessing of God may be with us always, and in all things.

Let me then ask you, my friend—Is prayer an easy thing? On the contrary, be assured that the more you strive to live a life of prayer, the more will you feel your own infirmity and insufficiency in this most blessed duty.

But be not discouraged by this: for when we earnestly endeavour to pray (which is one of the chief marks of grace), "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities." God himself pours out upon us the spirit of grace and of supplications. He teaches us how to pray "as we ought." He shows us our spiritual wants, and helps us to lay them before him. Thus

it is that our prayers are "according to the will of God."

There are seasons when it is no easy matter to pray at all. We can scarcely force ourselves to the duty. The stupid soul hangs back, and seems wholly disinclined to devotion. If this arises from weakness of body or mind, God will view it with pity. If it grows out of negligence, we should lose no time in deeply humbling ourselves before God: till we have done this, it is not likely, that he will receive our souls.

We sometimes find ourselves praying, for a while, with unwonted fervency and delight. But O how soon do our thoughts wander, and our hearts grow cold! What would our prayers then be, if the Spirit did not help us? Like the flame of a lamp, just going out! But the Spirit pours in fresh oil, and kindles anew our drooping graces.

Sometimes, instead of ready utterance, and lively feelings in prayer, we seem to be quite at a loss—quite bewildered—quite cast down. All we can do, is, groan and sigh. But if these groanings come from the heart, they are quite as acceptable as the longest prayer that ever flowed from an eloquent tongue. Often, they are much more acceptable; for they show the heart to be emptied of all other comfort, and longing most earnestly for the grace of God. A man dying of hunger, gasping for breath, cannot make a fine speech, to describe what he suffers; but his moans and cries pierce our heart more than any words could do. So it is with God, when he listens to the sighs of a broken-hearted sinner.

Words cannot tell the feelings of such a man; but God understands them.

There are many instances of this kind in the Book of Psalms. If you can pray David's prayers, your soul is most assuredly in a healthy state.

Remember constantly, and above all, that our prayers are to be offered up only through Christ Jesus, who ever liveth at the right hand of God to make intercession for us. His are the all-prevailing prayers! Ours prevail only through Him.

PRAYER.

O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come. Help us to draw near unto Thee, now, in an acceptable time, through Christ the living way. Pour out upon us the Spirit of grace and of supplications. Let thy good Spirit help our infirmities; teaching us what to ask, and enabling us with earnestness and assurance to implore all those blessings, which are treasured up in Christ.

Lord, by thy Holy Spirit, fix our wandering thoughts, that we may find our rest in Thee. Whenever we come into thy presence, let us have grace to serve thee acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. When we fall down before thy throne, covered with shame and confusion of face, O say to every fainting soul, I am thy salvation. Heal the broken and contrite heart. When we are swallowed up of over-much sorrow, and know not in what words to pour forth our petitions unto thee, be not Thou far from us: bow down thine ear and hear us, and let our sighing come before thee. When we

call unto thee out of the low dungeon, hide not thine ear at our breathing—at our cry. O thou man of sorrows, now Lord of glory, plead thou the causes of our soul, and redeem our life from destruction.

We beseech thee, Heavenly Father, suffer us not, in the day of sickness and feebleness, to lose the comfort of thy presence, and the consolations of thy Spirit. And, when the hour of death draws nigh, and our eyes begin to fail with looking upward, Lord, undertake for us: though heart and flesh fail, be Thou, Lord, the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever.

We ask these great mercies through the all-prevailing intercession of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

XXII.

ALL THINGS WORKING FOR GOOD.

ROMANS viii. 28.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Love towards their Heavenly Father is the chief mark of the children of God. "We love him because he first loved us." His servants are "the called according to his purpose." But they are not yet wholly delivered from the miseries of this sinful state below. Those who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, still groan within themselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their body.

This one great consolation, however, believers

have, in their many afflictions—they know that all shall work for their good. Trials, in fact, are so necessary to a child of God, that, without them, he might almost doubt whether he really belonged to God's family.

Reflect on the need we have of chastisement.—Can we say that our hearts continue always stedfast in the covenant of God? Far from it: on the contrary, we are often inclined to start aside like a broken bow. We naturally have an evil heart of unbelief, which would lead us to depart from the living God.

God sees this, and he corrects his children for it. They meanwhile receive his correction, according to the purpose which He intended by it. They love him; and they know that He loves them: therefore they are persuaded that he chastens them for their profit.

Our trials and afflictions are like medicines; which, indeed, are made up of many bitter and disagreeable things: but they are all intended to cure our diseases, and restore us to health. So is it with the soul: we are put to pain for a little time, that we may be saved eternally.

Take the following instances of our Heavenly Father's kind discipline:—

1. Does God see any one, among his children, walking carelessly, and after the spirit of this world? Then he sends some rod, to bring that child to reflection and prayer. Whatever sorrow works to this end, works for good.

2. Does he see us doting on some dear worldly

object? Perhaps he takes away the idol; or he threatens to do so. The husband, it may be—or the wife—or the tenderly-beloved child, is smitten with sickness. Then we remember that the creature is but a broken cistern for comfort; and we hear once more His gracious voice, bidding us come to Him, as the fountain of living waters.

3. Are we going far away, in a backsliding or perverse spirit? Then God meets us, and thwarts or disappoints our plans, that we may not return to the madness of sin, and the folly of the world. He says to us, "As many as I love, I rebuke, and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

4. Is there a danger, lest health, or worldly prosperity should tempt us to self-indulgence or self-importance? Then, by way of special mercy to his children, God sends some contrary dispensation. He dashes the cup from our lips: he casts a shadow over the glory of the prosperous: he puts the well-fed man, as it were, on low diet; giving him the bread of affliction to eat, and plenteousness of tears to drink.

It is not easy for a man to make up his mind to be a sufferer: it is contrary to nature; and affliction is a thing, which we are not taught by the Scriptures to pray for. God himself, therefore, appoints the time and measure of our sufferings: and He who inflicts the wound, is able to support us under it.

In short, whatever affliction it be that a believer receives at the hand of God—whether poverty, or sickness, or loss of friends, or sadness of heart—he

may say within himself, "These things are appointed for the good of my soul." He should not cry out, like Jacob, "All these things are against me:" but—'They are all *for* me. God has promised to make them work together for my good. Only, Lord, give me more faith, more love, and more submission to thy wise, and holy will!'

PRAYER.

O Lord, who hast assured us of thy fatherly pity towards all who love and fear thy name: We beseech thee to lead us near to thee, in all our temptations and distresses, that we may receive grace sufficient for us. O let the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, dwell in us, and abide with us continually. We confess that we are unworthy, and weak, and sinful creatures: but we entreat thee to pardon our iniquities, and to have compassion upon our infirmities. Deliver us from the condemnation, and from the power, of sin. Sanctify all thy corrections to the good of our souls: and comfort us with the sure hope that all shall be well with thy servants at the last; when grace shall have perfected the work begun in our hearts, and made us meet for the heavenly inheritance above, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

XXIII.

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.

ROMANS X. 1—4.

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS is an expression often used to describe that pride of heart, which leads a man to think that he can now justify himself, or that he will hereafter be able to justify himself, before God, by a goodness of his own. Such a man naturally rejects the righteousness of God: not submitting to be justified by the merits of another—that is, of Christ. The exact word, Self-righteousness, is not found in Scripture; yet there are two passages where it is very clearly described. Thus, in St. Luke xviii. 9, our Lord speaks of some, "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous;" that is, they were self-righteous. And in the words which I have just read to you, St. Paul describes those who "go about to establish their own righteousness."

This Self-righteousness is, in fact, one of the most determined spiritual enemies of God. The word sounds well, till you know what it means: but as soon as you understand it, according to St. Paul's doctrine set forth in these words, you will find that Self-righteousness is one of the worst hindrances to the receiving of the Gospel.

Let me explain to you, my friend, What it is that appears good in the Self-righteous; and then, What are the real evils which destroy all that seems so good. May, the Holy Spirit of God enlighten our

minds! The subject is very dark to our proud self-love, but very plain to those whom He teaches.

1. Now that which, at first sight, seems good in the Self-righteous, is, that "they have a zeal of God;" that is, they appear very desirous to be godly. This you will say is a right disposition. Doubtless it is, when it is genuine, flowing from the love of holiness. But the self-righteous, when they do what is right, have in their hearts a feeling of Self-satisfaction. They think they have done their duty to God; and now they account God their debtor. In this temper of mind many reform their lives, and even become strict in religious observances. They perform works of mercy: they are just, sober, and useful. But, alas! all our zeal, if we be ignorant of God's righteousness, may only carry us further and further from the Gospel of Christ. We may study good rules, and good examples; and yet be wholly ignorant of the doctrine of the Cross, and of the work of the Spirit.

2. What, then, are those evils, which prove the error and danger of Self-righteousness?

They are two—Ignorance, and Pride.

Self-righteous persons are, every way, fearfully ignorant.—They are Self-ignorant; not perceiving the exceedingly great vileness of their own hearts, and the utter unworthiness of their supposed goodness.—They are ignorant of God's holiness: judging of themselves, not by His searching, spiritual, perfect Law; but by the world's law: such a law as humours their frailties.—And they are grossly ignorant of "God's righteousness;" that is, His method of justifying the ungodly. They have no notion whatever

of His special, His peculiar plan of justification: they are blind to it: they cannot even endure the idea of justifying faith: they think it quite sufficient to trust to God's mercy in the most general way.

All this shows their manifold and most lamentable Ignorance.

Then, as to their Pride.—Mixed with all this ignorance, there is a spirit of Proud Independency in the Self-righteous. Fallen man is naturally proud: he wishes to think well of himself. Even the worst characters believe that there is some good left in them. How much more must the moral and respectable be tempted to think that they are worthy!—Pride will not submit, therefore, to receive heaven as an undeserved gift. This is what is meant by proud independency of spirit. The Self-righteous will not stoop to receive. They stand upon their right, as they call it. They will not be so entirely beholden to Christ—to Christ alone. They claim some reward for their own good works. Thus they shut themselves out from grace.

Such were those Jews, over whom St. Paul mourned, and on whose behalf he so affectionately prayed. They would not "submit themselves unto the righteousness of God." They would not humbly confess themselves to be sinners, unable to save themselves, and needing Christ to save them. They thought to purchase salvation by their own works. O think—how *can* we perfectly obey the law of God! It is impossible. And yet we are so foolish, so presumptuous, as to bring before God some little doings of our own, and expect Him to admire them, as much

as we do ourselves. If we felt how holy God is, and how vile we are, we should never dare, for a moment, to go about to establish our own righteousness: we should as soon think of putting on ragged, patched garments, and then presenting ourselves at the gate of a palace.

Let us, my friend, be assured of this—that salvation is altogether of free grace, through Christ, and through Christ alone. The holy law of God ought fully to convince us that we cannot be saved by our obedience to the law; and the Gospel reveals, that Christ has wrought out salvation for us in another way. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." He perfectly fulfilled the Law: he suffered the curse of the Law: thus hath he answered one important design of the Law; namely—to lead sinners to seek justification by faith in Him.

If, then, you believe in Jesus, you will be saved. If, with earnest prayer, you seek the help of his Spirit, you will be made holy. Away then with Self-righteousness, which can only hinder you from coming to Christ! Humbly submit yourself to the righteousness of God. Follow his way of salvation;—not your own.

PRAYER.

O thou God of infinite holiness and purity, by whom our thoughts and actions are weighed, and are found altogether wanting: Teach us with all humility to bow before thee, not presuming to trust in our own righteousness, but leaning only on the

hope of thy free mercy in Christ Jesus. Pluck out of our hearts that deeply-rooted pride, through which we might think to recommend ourselves to Thee, by our own good works. Lord, we have no acceptable and perfect righteousness of our own: we are nothing worth. At our very best estate, we are but poor, helpless, weak, and undone sinners. Work in our hearts such a spiritual view of thy law, and such tenderness of conscience, that we may, with unfeigned humility, pray like the Publican—God be merciful to me, a sinner!

O gracious God, for ever adored be thy holy Name, that thou hast prepared, through thy Son Jesus, that glorious and perfect righteousness, which is unto all and upon all them that believe. Let us clothe ourselves in it; so that, being found in Christ, we may be saved from wrath, and accepted by Thee. And let the love of Christ Crucified rule in our hearts, that we may walk in the Spirit, and abound in every good word and work.

Have compassion, O Lord, upon thine ancient people, the Jews; and take away the veil from their hearts, that they may see their great guilt, and behold thy glory in the face of Jesus Christ. O thou who alone canst humble the proud, cause all mankind, through the grace of thy Blessed Spirit, to feel their hopeless wretchedness: and may they come weary and heavy laden, to Jesus, who promises rest to every burdened soul.

Hear us, we humbly beseech, for the sake of Him who is the Lord our righteousness, even Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

XXIV.

TEMPTATION COMMON TO MAN.

1 CORINTHIANS x. 11—13.

Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

THE Bible abounds with instructive histories; and we should read them with prayer and self-application. They have been a guide to the people of God in former ages; and they will be useful to Christians to the very end of time. Let us consider what St. Paul here says, intending both to caution, and to encourage us.

He sets before us the history of the Israelites, in the verses just preceding. (Read verses 5—10.) The Israelites in the wilderness were continually falling into sin. We might have thought, after they had been so wonderfully delivered out of Egypt, and had sung at the Red Sea the high praises of the Lord, that they would have served Him without ever turning back. But within a while they began to murmur, to rebel, and to fall again into their old evil practices: (see Psalm lxxviii. 3, 17, 32—37.) A true and mournful picture of our own hearts!

Looking, moreover, into various other parts of the Bible, we read the mournful fact, that several holy

men fell into sin, though it was only for a time. Their history is a solemn warning to us. For we are all children of the same family, partakers of the same corrupt nature, and placed in the midst of similar temptations. Look at such cases as the following. Abraham, the father of the faithful, was twice guilty of unbelief, and falsehood. David, the man after God's own heart, fell for a season, into the grossest sins. And bold Peter, through sudden cowardice, denied his Lord. Who can read of these instances, and not tremble for himself?

1. First, then, to make us cautious, let us be well convinced of our own Frailty. We are weak creatures, set in the very midst of temptations. The whole of our life is one continued trial. The world is full of snares: Satan is continually assaulting us: and our hearts are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Various are the trials to be passed through: trials at every stage of life, and some of them of quite opposite natures to each other. Thus—some are tried by poverty; others are ensnared by riches. By some, the great blessing of health is abused, and so becomes an occasion of their falling into sin: in other cases, when sickness is sent, we are tempted to indulge in murmurings against God. Companions and friends may prove a hindrance, or even a stumbling-block to us, in our spiritual course: at other times, solitude may bring its peculiar dangers. Most of all, our own carelessness and pride are a snare to us: spiritual self-confidence is, of all temptations, the most dangerous. Therefore the Apostle well says,

“Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

2. But, if you deeply feel your weakness, you need not therefore despair. No: this very humility, this very fear, is a pledge that you will be upheld. For remember, on the other hand, the unchangeable Faithfulness of God. Strive to exercise faith in Him, as well as distrust of yourself.

Perhaps you are ready sometimes to think, that the temptations by which you are assaulted are such as no one ever suffered before you—at least, not in such a degree. This is a very common notion with young converts. Having had but little experience in this holy war, they feel their trials to be new, and suppose them to be peculiar. Whereas, their temptations are just of the same kind as what saints of old encountered; and saints of the present day experience the same. The more we reflect on the histories of Abel, Enoch, Noah; of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph; of Moses, Job, David; of Peter, John, Paul, and others—the more clearly shall we perceive that they all went over the same rugged road which we are now travelling. They were frail, and they were tempted to sin, even as we.

But how were they delivered? And how may we hope for deliverance?—First of all, we must remember, that they were saved through the atoning blood of Jesus, equally as we are. By faith they beheld and embraced Christ; and found mercy and forgiveness through Him.—Then, for their daily walk, God gave them strength—his own strength, the grace of the Holy Spirit. As their day, so was their

strength. They continually waited on him; and He, according to his promise, continually renewed their strength. So will he renew it to you and to me, if we are found watching unto prayer. His promises are still the same, and they never fail. That one sentence—"My grace is sufficient for thee," is a staff to lean upon, all our journey through. Lord, increase our faith!

Various are the methods by which God can deliver his people out of danger. He can either put the temptation out of our way; or He can place us out of the reach of the temptation, making for us "a way to escape." And such kindness he actually does show to those who are sorely pressed, but who yet abide faithful to Him, in obedience and prayer.

Let me add this word—Have you at any time yielded to temptation; or are you now yielding? What in such cases ought to be advised? I answer—Seek for pardoning and restoring grace. Beware of unbelief. The Lord is very forgiving and full of pity, though we are so very sinful. Approach the throne of grace. Come, beseeching the Lord to renew you to holiness, for his dear Son's sake. Seeing how very frail and unworthy you are, "be not high-minded, but fear." And when the Lord is pacified towards you, never again open your mouth in self-justification, nor lift up your head with self-esteem. Keep the lowest place. Yet, be cheered by his loving-kindness and faithfulness. "He giveth grace to the humble." Yea—"he giveth more grace." His grace is a never-failing fountain.

PRAYER.

O Lord, who hast placed us in the midst of many and great temptations, to prove us, and to show us what is in our hearts whether we will keep thy commandments, or no: Leave us not to ourselves, for our own strength is perfect weakness. How often have we fallen into sins, from which we thought we had escaped! We have not feared before Thee, nor walked circumspectly, as becometh such feeble creatures. Many times have we grieved and tempted thy Holy Spirit, and provoked thee to displeasure against us.

But blessed be thy Name, that in thee we have a faithful God, long-suffering, abundant in mercy and truth, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin. O let thy goodness daily lead us to repentance. Help us continually to be looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Comfort and support us, by his love. Establish our faith. Quicken our obedience. Enable us to glorify thee on earth, and to persevere even unto the end. Build us up on Him, who is our Righteousness and Strength, our Lord and our Redeemer.

Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy: To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

XXV.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

1 CORINTHIANS XV. 51—58.

Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: (for the trumpet shall sound,) and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

ALL the promises of the Gospel are intended to stir up believers to greater faith and holiness. Surely nothing can more enliven a pilgrim on his way to heaven, than this doctrine of our resurrection at the last day, when soul and body shall be re-united, and saints shall be glorified for ever in the presence of the Lord.

How strange, how surprising is it to think, that a poor, corrupt corpse, which has mingled with the dust many years, should be raised up a spiritual and glorious body!—Yet, if we reflect on the subject a little while, we shall find that there is nothing in

the doctrine contrary to common sense; nothing to stagger any reasonable man.

For, look at the natural growth of flowers, of trees, and of corn;—and learn of them. You put a small, mean-looking seed into the ground, where it lies buried many days. The seed itself rots in the earth: and yet, at the very time of its perishing, roots strike downward from it, and a stem shoots upward, and in due time you see a plant—perhaps a most beautiful flower. And in this same way the noblest and most useful trees grow. Look at the strong boughs and trunk of the majestic oak: this large tree, the monarch of the forest, sprang from a single acorn. Or see the husbandman casting a handful of corn upon the earth, and then harrowing it in. Within a few months a crop springs up, bearing thirty, sixty, or an hundredfold. You see, then, that nothing is too hard for Almighty God. In like manner, He who caused the seed to die, and then sprout up again, will also “change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.”

Our Lord Jesus himself thus speaks concerning the Resurrection: he had just said—“The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” He then adds—“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

Believers sleeping in the grave, and believers still alive on the earth at the Day of Judgment, will all alike be changed. They will be changed "in a moment." God can create—and He can new-create us—as easily in a moment as in a thousand years: therefore, "in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality."

What a blessed change will this be to believers! "The sting of death is sin." It was sin that brought death into the world: and sin alone gives death its terror. "The strength of sin is the law:" for the holy law of God proves us to be sinners, and condemns us as such. "But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"—victory over sin, through the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin, and through the sanctifying Spirit of Christ—victory over the fear of death, through the comfort of Christ's presence—yea, victory over death itself, through the resurrection of our Lord—this is the glorious victory, the complete victory, for which we thank God, through Jesus Christ.

O my friend! earnestly pray for grace to believe in this Saviour and Redeemer. Commit your soul to him. Abide in him; that when he shall appear, you may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. Love him much, and serve him much. "Be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

—But in that day, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? O how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?

PRAYER.

O Lord God, our Creator and daily Benefactor: By thee have we been holden up, ever since we were born, and through thy mercy we have continued unto this day. Thou wilt also, in thine own good time, bring us to death, to the house appointed for all living. We humbly beseech thee, stir up our hearts to consider our latter end, and to prepare to meet thee, our God. Make us truly humble, with a godly sorrow for our manifold sins: and draw us to thy dear Son, that we may be justified through faith in Him, and accepted as thy redeemed children. Cause us to walk in the way that leadeth unto life; and to abstain from whatever might displease thee, or wound our own consciences. Whatever we may possess or lose in this world, O let us not lose our souls, or be cast away. May we labour to have always a conscience void of offence; and may we enjoy the comfort of thy Spirit all our days, and find peace at the last.

O our Father, whenever it shall please thee to call us hence, grant that we may depart with a lively hope of the resurrection to eternal life. May our heart be glad and our tongue rejoice, in the assurance that thou wilt redeem us from the grave, and receive us to glory. O enable us, in this blessed expectation, stedfastly to follow those who have departed this life in thy faith and fear, so that in the Last Day we may with them inherit thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XXVI

THINGS TEMPORAL, AND THINGS ETERNAL.

2 CORINTHIANS IV. 16—18.

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

WHEN we are in health, it is very difficult to feel that we are dying creatures. But when sickness and affliction come upon us, then we begin to learn, with a very thoughtful and serious spirit, that this world is not our home.

Many persons faint when sorrow thus touches them: others bear up under their troubles, and take courage. Some have weak spirits; others, strong.

After all, however, there is no solid comfort, but that which springs from faith. When we feel the body wearing out, and death approaching, and eternity close at hand, then let us look beyond the grave. Holy hope was the comfort of St. Paul: oh, may it be yours and mine!

It is by faith that the soul is united to Christ, and truly lives: it receives from Him an eternal life. When we live in Christ, though our outward man may perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day: the soul is growing, while the body is decaying.

Observe the manner, in which various afflictions work on the mind of true Christians.

Sickness, though painful to the flesh, is nevertheless profitable to the spirit. It brings sin to our remembrance: it should lead us to mourn deeply for sin: it should remind us how great a punishment we deserve for our sins; and make us feel thankful that we are spared that heaviest of all punishments, the bitter pains of eternal death.

Perhaps we lose some beloved friend or relative by death. We are then feelingly reminded, that our dearest comforts are not given us to be enjoyed for ever: they are only lent for a season. But is it not better "to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting?" Yes, it is good for us to be cut off from earthly comforts, if we are thereby led to prize more dearly our best hope, our redemption and everlasting salvation through Christ.

Yet sometimes our trials seem so great, that we are ready to be overwhelmed by them. We suppose our own troubles to be far heavier than ever were known by any one else. At such a moment, let us think of St. Paul's persecutions and afflictions. For Christ's sake he suffered the loss of all things. Of himself and his fellow-labourers he says, "Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place."—And yet he calls all this, "Our *light* affliction!" How then can we complain of ours?

He adds the very significant words—"Which are but for a moment." Here lies one secret of a believer's comfort and patience under affliction. The longest grief will soon be over; no more to return for ever!

St. Paul adds—"They work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Our sufferings have, indeed, no merit: they cannot *purchase* that weight of glory; but they may be of great use in *preparing* us for it.

For, see what sanctified affliction does. It sets things before us in their true light. It brings home to our hearts the difference between things temporal, and things eternal. The things which are seen, are temporal: and sanctified affliction makes us feel them to be such. The world quickly passeth away; trials and temptations will soon end; the dream will presently vanish; in a little time the believer will shed his last tear, and utter his last groan. Then, glory and joy will be his everlasting portion! Things, now unseen, will open before him: he will see God face to face: he will behold Christ in all his beauty and loveliness: angels will carry him to Abraham's bosom; and God himself shall wipe away all tears from his eyes.—Sanctified affliction brings these comfortable thoughts to his remembrance.

Happy believer, know thy glorious privilege! O meditate upon it day by day; and let it still shine brightest in the darkest night! Christ is thine! Thou art his! Can any thing be added to this happiness? In Jesus, thy very griefs are a part of thy "good things." Thy bitterest sorrows tend to sweetest pleasures. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." The mourning is for a moment: the comfort is for eternity.

PRAYER.

O our Heavenly Father, who dost not willingly afflict the children of men: We thank thee for thy gracious declaration, that all things work together for good, to them that love thee. Unite us to the blessed company of thy redeemed children, through faith in Jesus Christ; and being justified and accepted in him, may we enjoy the consolations of thy Spirit, and the comfort of thy love. When thou chastenest, teach us to receive thy correction meekly, and to profit by it. Suffer us not to faint in the day of adversity; but may we rather rejoice in the hope of passing out of much tribulation into the kingdom of God. O grant us patience, that we may account our afflictions to be light, and but for a moment: and give to us an increase of faith, that we may feel the reality of things unseen and eternal. Thus, O our God and Saviour, keep us faithful unto death, that we may at length receive the crown of life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XXVII.

THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION.

2 CORINTHIANS xiii. 14.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

NEXT to the Lord's Prayer, there is perhaps no form of words more commonly used than this Benediction. It is short and simple; yet full and comprehensive: mentioning those spiritual blessings which we constantly need; and naming the Three Persons of the Ever-blessed Trinity, who severally impart those

blessings. We invoke the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; in whose sacred Name we were baptized, from whom all blessings flow, and to whom all honour, glory, and praise are due for evermore.

1. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is mentioned first: probably, because Jesus is the Mediator between God and us, and through Him mercy is shown. He is the Channel through whom grace is sent to us. We present our prayers to Him, in order that He may present them to his Father. The word "grace" means, his free, undeserved bounty and favour—and with it, all that he has purchased with his most precious blood on the Cross. Pardon—reconciliation—acceptance with God—justification, through faith—adoption into the family of God—all these blessings flow, as it were, from the pierced side of our Redeemer. And now, sitting on the right hand of the Father, he ever pleads for us, as our Advocate. Do our consciences accuse us of innumerable sins, and do we fear the wrath of the Almighty on their account? Jesus pleads—"I, even I, thy beloved Son, have suffered the curse of these sinners. Father, forgive them!"—In a word, whatsoever we ask the Father in his name, he will give it us. When, therefore, we say, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us—we ask for all the benefits of his continual intercession on our behalf.

2. "The love of God" is then mentioned. From the streams of grace in Christ, we go upward to the Source and Fountain-Head, even to the eternal love of the Father. "God is love." Words can say nothing greater than this. Our Heavenly Father

has however manifested his love by deeds; in that He spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—Therefore, when we pray, "May the love of God be with us," we are asking for such a lively assurance of his loving-kindness towards us in Christ Jesus, as may cause our souls to glow with love to Him in return. Then shall we exclaim, "We love Him, because he first loved us."

3. "And the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you!" How fitly are these words added! They are full of unction. They remind us, that it is the office of the Holy Ghost to convey all spiritual blessings to the heart, by the secret working of his Almighty Power. It is his office to regenerate, and bring to life our dead souls; to stamp the image of God on our hearts, and so new-create us in Christ Jesus. He teaches us spiritual things: otherwise we should never understand them. He carries on the work of holiness, in those whom he has regenerated. It is also his office to comfort the children of God, as they travel through this waste wilderness below: therefore his special title is, "The Comforter." How full a prayer is this, which asks that the Teaching, Sanctifying, and Comforting influences of the Holy Spirit may abide with us!—When thus praying, let us also remember what is our duty to this Holy Spirit; namely, not to grieve Him—not to quench the Spirit; but, by watching unto prayer, and by hearty obedience, to cherish his

presence in our souls: that He may abide with us for ever.

Let all, then, lay claim to this blessing, by adding a hearty "Amen" to it. Let it be our companion in all our spiritual exercises with God, and in all our duties among men. Never let us be separated from this full blessing, through negligence or sin: the more closely we cleave to this blessing, the more shall we be kept from all iniquity.

When we come to die, we shall find the comfort of this blessing to be very abundant, if we live in the faithful use of it during health. Its very simplicity is suited to a dying moment. It breathes forth grace, mercy, and peace to the feeble, fainting spirit. The departing saint may say—"My heart and my flesh faileth; but God"—even the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—"He is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

PRAYER.

O Lord God Almighty, Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only wise God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ hast opened the way for us sinners, that we may all by one Spirit have access unto thee, through Him: Help us to draw near to thee at this time; and enable us so to ask as to obtain the blessings which thou art ever ready to bestow. O enlarge our desires; raise our affections; quicken our faith: that as Thou hast done such great things for our souls, we may not fall short of thy gracious purposes, through our sinfulness or negligence.

Heavenly Father, lift up, we beseech thee, the

light of thy reconciled countenance upon us, and give us peace. Forgive us all our sins; and enable us to walk before thee in all those good works, which thou hast ordained for thy children to walk and to delight in.

Blessed Jesus, who by thy precious blood hast redeemed us: Be thou our Advocate; and pray the Father for us, that we may be freed from condemnation, and may obtain eternal life through thee.

O Holy Spirit, who dost sanctify and comfort all the elect people of God: Dwell in us, and rule in our hearts, that we may abide in the Father, and in the Son, and in Thee, now and ever. Renew us day by day. Write in our hearts the law of holy love. Strengthen us against every temptation: deliver us from the power of sin, and make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

XXVIII.

GLORYING IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

GALATIANS VI. 14.

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

GLORYING in the cross of Christ is a feeling which none can know, but genuine believers in Christ. Some trust in their supposed good works: others

pride themselves in their religious party: St. Paul simply desires to be found in Christ, and to glory in Him alone. May the Holy Spirit shed abroad in our hearts true faith and love, that we may learn to glory in our Crucified Redeemer!

1. Let me, first of all, remind you, Whose cross is here spoken of. It is, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the everlasting God, the Creator of all things, the Lord of glory. Yet he left the bosom of his Father, to save us miserable sinners.

2. Next, observe that what the Apostle gloried in, was the Cross. He might have gloried in Christ's miracles, or in his wise discourses, or in the spotless character of his Lord. But, instead of this, he chooses the most inglorious, the most shameful scene in the history of Jesus, and glories in that.—Why thus glory in the cross? Because that cross shows the exceeding great love of Christ toward sinners, in his stooping so low to save them. It shows also his almighty power; since, by that very death, he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

3. Further, mark the word which the Apostle uses, when thus extolling the cross: he says—I “glory” in it. We never can be said to glory in any thing, unless it be in some sense our own. For example, if a rich man glories in his riches, it is because he accounts them his own property: if that gold belonged to somebody else, though he might admire it and covet it, yet he could not be said to glory in it. In like manner, if we heartily believe that Christ is a Saviour to us, then we shall glory in Him: not

otherwise. Let me ask, then, have *you* laid hold of Christ by faith? Have you fled to him as *your* Saviour? Do you possess the unsearchable riches of Christ?

4. The resolution adopted by St. Paul was singular: for the cross is an offence to the world; therefore the faithful followers of Christ are despised by the ungodly, just as their Master was. Do you find in yourself this mark of being Christ's disciple? Does the world hate you, and cast out your name as evil? Is the world thus crucified unto *you*?

5. But once more, observe the effect of the cross upon him who glories in it; and see whether any such effect is found in *you*. Are *you* crucified unto the world? Do you for Christ's sake mortify sin? Do you crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts? Are you never ashamed of Christ, in any company?

You see that St. Paul not only gloried in the cross, but he could glory in nothing else. O that our souls may thus triumph in the Lord! If we duly felt his mercy in redeeming us from the pit of destruction, by the shedding of his own most precious blood, we should keep nothing back from Him. We should give up to Him ourselves, our souls and bodies, and all that we have: still counting all far too little, in return for his love!

PRAYER.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hast revealed to us, miserable sinners, thine unspeakable love, in the gift of thy dear Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ:

We acknowledge it to be our highest duty and honour to believe in him and to serve him, to love him and to glory in him, and (should it be thy blessed will) even to suffer the loss of all things for his Name's sake. Give us grace, we beseech thee, to cast away all confidence in ourselves, and to come daily for that pardon, which was purchased by the blood of his cross. And let thy Holy Spirit rule in our hearts, and make them wholly thine; enabling us, while here below, to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, daily to deny ourselves, and to take up our cross and follow Christ.

O Lord, whatever the vain boasters of this world may think of us, or of our adorable Master, enable us constantly to confess him, and willingly to bear the reproach of Christ: accounting it greater riches than all the treasures of this earth. O strengthen us with might, by thy Spirit in the inner man, that we may have grace to walk worthy of his blessed name. May we so abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. Hear us, we beseech thee, for the sake of the same thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XXIX.

SINNERS DEAD IN TRESPASSES.

EPHESIANS ii. 1—3.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

THE cry of every sinner should be, "What must I do to be saved?" The Gospel answers that cry, and tells us, that salvation comes from the free grace of God in Christ Jesus. This we may learn from the very solemn words of the Apostle, in this passage.

1. First, St. Paul describes the sinner's state—your state, my friend, and mine, by nature.

"Dead in trespasses and sins." Sin is the death of the soul: it keeps us from God, who is our life. Holiness springs from the life of God in the soul of man. While, therefore, we willingly continue in our natural state, we are dead to God, and alive only to sin.

"The course of this world," is the path in which unconverted men walk. They have no higher, no better rule.—And have you considered, my friend, that whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God? Perhaps you answer, "I am not worse than my neighbours; I only live like other people: we must do as others do." Alas! this is the very thing condemned by the Bible—this is walking "according to the course of the world." This is the broad road, which, as our Saviour says, "leadeth to destruction."

Further, have you considered who is the god of this world? Reflect, I pray you, on those awful words of St. Paul, in which he describes sinners of every kind as being "taken captive by the devil at his will." Satan is that evil and malicious spirit, which "worketh in the children of disobedience."

And yet this state of sin and death is so natural to us, that sinners continue in it with very little misgiving in their consciences. The fact is, they go on "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." They are but doing what is most natural to them. Thus were we born. We "were by nature children of wrath." We grew up in sin, adding iniquity to iniquity. And the only difference between a sinner living on earth, and a lost sinner cast into hell, is, that there is hope for the one who is yet alive, but no hope for the other. Both are enemies of God: but there is hope that the living sinner may possibly, ere he die, be persuaded to cast away his transgressions, and become reconciled unto God. He is yet within the call of Mercy.

Meditate seriously, my friend, on these things. See the dreadful nature of sin. Search and examine the state of your own heart and life.—At my next visit we will consider the free grace of God toward those who are brought out of this awful and deadly state.

PRAYER.

O Lord our God, in whose sight we were, at our very birth, children of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins: We have just cause to lament before thee that many of our days have been passed in folly and iniquity, and that we were thus heaping up wrath against our own souls. How much of our time have we spent according to the course of this world! How have we followed the devices and desires of our own hearts, and yielded to the power of our deadly enemy! We are amazed when we think how

we have disobeyed and neglected thee, who art the rightful Lord of all we have and are.

O thou Father of mercies, our sins have not been hidden from thee: we have provoked thee, even to thy face; and yet hast thou spared and preserved us, to this very hour. We are still living: yea, we have the hope of salvation still set before us in the Gospel. Graciously dispose our hearts to accept the mercy offered us in Christ Jesus. Incline us by the working of thy Holy Spirit to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil. Pardon the past: and enable us for the future to delight ourselves in Thee and in thy blessed service, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XXX.

BELIEVERS QUICKENED WITH CHRIST.

EPHESIANS II. 4—10.

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Not of works, lest any man should boast.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

THE mercy of the Lord is what every sinner needs. Had not this mercy been exceedingly great, it never

could have reached our miserable case: for we were "dead in trespasses and sins."

But God is "rich in mercy." He "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Let us observe, my friend, the gracious methods used by our pardoning God. They exactly suit all our wants.

1. Are we "dead in trespasses and sins?" Then he "quickens us"—"he quickens us together with Christ;" that is, he raises us from the death of sin, even as Christ was raised from the dead. A dead man, you know, cannot raise himself from the grave: he cannot even put forth his hand to help himself: he can neither see, nor hear, nor speak, nor feel. So is it with sinners, while they remain dead in their sins. Their outward ear may listen; but their soul does not hear divine things. But when God works on the heart, life returns to it.

2. Are we, in ourselves, hopeless and undeserving? Then observe, that it is of God's free grace, and through faith, that this new life is given to us. The spring of our hope is Christ. But there must be some way in which salvation is imparted to us. That way is, through faith. "By grace are ye saved, *through faith*: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." How simple, and how encouraging is this view!

Grace is a perfectly free gift. We do not earn grace by labouring for it. If we did, we should most certainly boast, that we had gained the grace

of God by our own right; and that we had, as it were, paid something for it. Very, very little it might be that we had paid; perhaps only a few prayers, or wishes for salvation: yet we should be sure in our hearts to boast of these. We should be ready to think that we had done something for God. But he truly is not thus to be dealt with. Nothing have we in ourselves, save only sin, and weakness, and misery. We must come to Him, feeling our own nothingness. "He filleth the hungry with good things; but the rich he hath sent empty away." "He giveth grace to the humble;" "the proud he be- holdeth afar off."

3. Were we once unholy, selfish, and worldly; and has God raised us from the death of sin? Then let us remember, that we are vessels of honour unto God. We are not our own; we are bought with a price, and for love's sake we should abound in all those good works "which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." For the Apostle says, "We are his workmanship." You know, it is the work produced, that shows the skill of the workman. Is, then, *your* heart made holy, so that you can justly view it as the workmanship of God? Is your conversation honourable to the Gospel? Can they who know you best, say—This man lives like one redeemed from sin; he is a true disciple of Christ, striving to be like his Master!—Moreover, does your own heart testify that you long to be made like Christ?

4. There is but one thing more for me to remark. If we are vessels of honour, then he who has raised

us to our heavenly rank in Christ will show forth his pity, his kindness, and his grace in us, to everlasting ages. Every saint is an eternal monument of grace. He is a pillar in the temple of his God. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" Let us walk with Him here, unto all well pleasing, that we may dwell before his face hereafter, in glory everlasting!

PRAYER.

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, who art rich in mercy to all them that call upon Thee faithfully: We come in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ, desiring to be admitted into thy family, and to be fed as thy children, with the free and abundant blessings of the Gospel. O let thy Holy Spirit raise us to the life of righteousness. We are weak and unable to help ourselves: but in Thee is our help. Do thou strengthen us with all might by thy Spirit in the inner man, that we may live to thy praise.

We humbly beseech thee, O Lord, to renew us after thine image, and to uphold us day by day in the midst of all our temptations, that we may be preserved blameless, to thine eternal kingdom: there to join with angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, in praising and glorifying thee for thine abounding grace, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

XXXI.

THE OLD MAN, AND THE NEW.

EPHESIANS iv. 20—32.

But ye have not so learned Christ;

If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Neither give place to the devil.

Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.

And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

THE Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ breathes the spirit of holiness. Let any person study this passage now read to you: and the oftener he reads it, the more will he see what a high and holy art it is, to "learn Christ." May Christ himself be our teacher, while we meditate on these words!

A distinction is here plainly drawn between "the

old man," and "the new man." The one is to be put off; the other, put on.

1. The "Old man," that is, our depraved, fallen nature, may be known by the following particulars:—

It is a nature altogether full of evil, sin, worldliness, misery and vileness. It is like a dead body; corrupt, and tending to still worse corruption.

It is deceitful. The heart of every unconverted man is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" It is so wrapt up in its own deceitfulness, that it cannot even know itself. It loves a lie, makes a lie, and keeps up the world's cheat; especially that almost universal deception, which leads ungodly men to say—"We shall have peace, though we walk after the imagination of our hearts:" "we shall not surely die."

The temper of the "old man" is seen in anger and strife. It is unmerciful and unforgiving.

In these two last—namely, deceitfulness and unmercifulness—the "old man" is like the Devil; who was not only a liar, but also a murderer, from the beginning.

This old nature of fallen man is selfish and fraudulent. All thieves are under the power of their natural selfishness, and deceit.

The mouth of the "old man" is full of bitterness, blasphemy, indecency. And though many unconverted persons may be too well bred to utter all that is in their hearts—and though they may even give to their conversation a sort of refinement and polish—yet, within, God sees their wicked feelings, motives, wishes and purposes.

2. The opposite to all this is, the "New man."

Let us specially observe where the cure begins;—in the heart! "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." This must be the work of the Spirit of God. And till this great change is effected, it is all in vain to mind a few outward features of the character. It is like merely lopping off a few boughs of a tree to bring it into shape, while the root remains unsound. "Make the tree good, and his fruit good"—saith our Lord.

The "new man" is "a new creation"—"created in righteousness and true holiness."

The "new man" is pure, true, kind, gentle, and easy to be entreated. Oh, what a wonderful change does the Spirit of God produce! See the idle, dishonest man made a diligent charitable member of society! Look at the drunkard and the profligate becoming sober, chaste and holy! Hear lips—once accustomed to profaneness—now touched with the grace of the Spirit, and speaking to edification! See a person of a hard and bitter temper rendered kind and tender-hearted!—Such triumphs of grace belong to the Spirit of God. Oh that we saw them more numerous, and more complete!

Remember, my friend, that if Christ's Blessed Spirit has begun to work on *your* heart, your special duty is, not to grieve Him. How is He grieved? By neglect of prayer: by sloth: when we yield to the spirit of the world: in short, when we suffer our old nature to prevail again. Have you something of the stamp of the Holy Spirit on your heart? Have you some degree of fitness for the kingdom of

Heaven? Have you good reason to believe, that you have passed from death unto life? Then, watch over this good beginning: and pray earnestly that the work of sanctification may be more and more perfected.

PRAYER.

● Lord God, merciful and gracious, holy, just and true: Have pity upon us, miserable and sinful creatures, who are not worthy to come before thy Divine Majesty. We beseech thee freely to pardon all our past sins, and to sprinkle our consciences with the atoning blood of Jesus. O sanctify our hearts by the grace of thy holy Spirit; enabling us to mortify the flesh, to renounce the world, and to resist the great enemy of our souls.

Teach us, Lord, to walk in all lowliness and meekness, in purity, and truth, and love. Enable us to excel in holiness, that our example and conversation may be edifying to others; that they, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven. Hear us, and answer us according to the abundance of thy grace, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

XXXII.

ADDRESS TO THE INTEMPERATE.

EPHESIANS V. 18, 19.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

MEN "given to wine," and "men of strength to mingle strong drink," appear not very likely to mind religious advice. Yet they must be pleaded with constantly, that they may not perish eternally. Therefore, this word is for them. Oh may the Spirit of God carry it to the heart of some poor creature who is falling under the power of drunkenness! Let me stretch out a friendly hand, to pluck the sinner, like a brand out of the burning, ere it be too late.

Sinners generally go on from one excess to another, till at length they become mad upon their lusts. This is particularly the case with drunkards, who pass continually from riot to stupidity, and then back again from stupidity to riot; plunging deeper and deeper, till at last they sink.

But, my friend, as you permit me to speak to you on this subject, consider for a while, whether there be any cure for intemperance. Perhaps you give it up as a hopeless case. The Bible, however, assures us that there is a remedy for this vice. Mark the case of the Ephesians. Did not they leave off their habits of excess—and may not you hope to do so? Is not the same grace offered to you, as to them?

But how—you ask—is this great change wrought?

I answer—The cure of sin must begin at the heart: and the Physician who must apply the remedy to the disease, is no other than Christ. The way in which he does it, is this—He speaks by his Spirit to the heart. Hear Christ speak. He bids you put away strong drink, that poison of soul and body. And he invites you to open your heart, that the Spirit of the Lord may enter, and fill you with holiness and joy.

1. First, then, let me speak to you of Repentance. Let Christ, by his word and by his Spirit, convince you, that excessive drinking is a dreadful sin. Whether this vice be constantly upon you, or only now and then—in all cases it is a sin against God, and therefore leads to perdition. If you do not repent and leave it off, it will most certainly cast body and soul into hell. This will be far more terrible than the lowness of spirits which you dread, and which you try to avoid by drinking. Better have low spirits now, than lie under God's wrath for ever!

2. But, O let the Spirit of God speak yet another word: it is—Pardon! pardon for all the past—for sins innumerable! Yes, the drunkard's sins are past all counting: you know not how many sins he commits. Shall I name a few? Swearing; lying; slandering; cruelty; filthy talking; all manner of uncleanness; Sabbath-breaking; stealing; and what not! Nay, be not angry: there really is no end to the catalogue of sins that accompany drunkenness. Be not angry: I do not say that you have been guilty of all these sins: I name them, only in order that you may feel more keenly the value of a free Pardon. Christ shows you his bleeding hands, his bleeding feet, and bleeding side, that you may know his love towards you. "Oh!" you cry, "but I do not deserve his love! Surely he cannot forgive me, the chief of sinners!" Yes: He can save the worst. Only turn to Him, and believe in Him. Pray—pray earnestly—pray and pray again, for Pardon;—for pardon through his most precious blood!

3. But how is this vice to be overcome and cast

out? Once more let me say—Begin at the heart! There let the Holy Spirit work. "Oh!" you think, "it is impossible! What! God's Holy Spirit enter the heart of a drunkard!" Yes, my friend, *it is possible*: thus it has been again and again; and I hope that you, too, will find the Spirit of God at work with your soul. This, which seems the most unlikely of all things, is the very thing you need; and it is your only hope. But it is a solid hope. Yes: the Spirit of God is willing to enter *your* heart, if you will but open it to him. Open it then, in prayer. Pray for the gift of the Spirit. And when He enters, moving you to godly sorrow, and inclining you to be holy—then—O give him your whole heart! Let Him fill it. "Be filled with the Spirit." If you entirely give him your heart, he will accept it, and will make you holy. If you keep back any part, He will be justly offended. O then entreat and beseech of Him to take the whole—the whole heart!

4. At present you little know what joys the Spirit of God can give! Alas! drunkards get such a vile relish for filthy and foolish songs, that they suppose psalms and hymns to be dulness itself; nay, perfect melancholy. But, my friend—**THE HEART!** there the cure begins! If the heart be changed, all is changed. Be assured, the Spirit of God can so change you, that you shall utterly abhor the drunkard's song; and instead of it, you shall begin the hymns of Saints and Angels: "singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Most earnestly therefore do I pray—The Lord give you
A NEW HEART!

Let me, at parting, repeat at least one verse of a favourite hymn: I beg you to learn it, and very often repeat it by yourself:—

Oh for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free;
A heart, that's sprinkled with the blood
So freely shed for me!

PRAYER.

Merciful God, who hast all hearts in thine hand: We beseech thee to look upon us, thine unworthy creatures, with pity and with mercy. We are sorely burdened with sin: and our consciences can have no rest, till thou, by thy Blessed Spirit, shalt speak pardon and peace through the blood of Jesus Christ. O holy Jesus, sin hath long had dominion over us: we pray thee to be our Almighty Redeemer. Break those bonds by which we are enslaved, and bid us go free. Let thy Holy Spirit fill our hearts; and sanctify us, both in soul and body. Enable us to lay aside the sins that do so easily beset us. Strengthen us to resist the enticements of sinful men, and let us turn away our foot from every place of temptation. O grant to us, Lord, such joy and peace in thee, that we may find our chief delight in thy service, and in the company of those whom thou lovest.

Have compassion, Heavenly Father, upon the multitudes who are now walking in the broad road that leadeth to destruction. O turn their feet into the way of peace.

We ask these great mercies for ourselves and

others, in the name of Him who hath loved us, and hath redeemed us unto God by his blood, even Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Saviour. Amen.

XXXIII.

FREEDOM FROM CAREFULNESS.

PHILIPPIANS IV. 6, 7.

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

THE life of man is laden with many burdens: and beside this, we have a natural inclination to increase our burdens by anxiety, fretfulness and grief. As our Saviour, therefore, commands us, "Take no thought for the morrow;" so here the Apostle bids us dismiss from our minds all sinful care—"Be careful for nothing."

That carefulness, which leads to diligence, is by no means forbidden. But what St. Paul here points at, is, anxiety springing from worldliness or unbelief.

Let us first consider some of the causes which occasion anxiety to our corrupt hearts; and then I will show you the cure of that anxiety.

1. The Causes of worldly anxiety are very numerous.

Some people are pinched by poverty: others are weighed down by family burdens. Some are thrown back in the world by their own imprudence: some, by the folly or fraud of others. Some meet with

broken limbs, or long and severe sicknesses, and are thus thrown out of employment. All these are real and great trials.

But there are likewise many persons, who seem to trouble themselves and others for trouble's sake; expecting afflictions that never come—at least, long before they do come. They seem to be always looking on the dark side of things.

It is plain that anxiety is sinful, when it draws away our heart from enjoying sweet communion with God. Perplexing cares also frequently interrupt plain duties. Sorrow, when excessive, weakens the hand, and unfits it for labour: and this may lead to a habit, a very lamentable habit, of much complaining, and little working. Moreover, when sinful carefulness gets the mastery over us, we may easily be tempted to follow crooked devices, in order to get out of our troubles.

Surely it is a bad sign, when unbelief has so far taken possession of our hearts, that we cannot enjoy those delightful words of David—"The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want."

2. But you will now ask for the Cure of anxiety. You say, How can we dismiss anxiety? Our fears and griefs come rushing upon us, like an army: how can we dispossess these enemies, and scatter them? What can calm a troubled mind?

The Apostle gives us a remedy: it is twofold—Prayer, and Praise.

He bids us, "by prayer and supplication, make our requests known unto God." If, instead of crying to the winds, we at once turned to the throne of grace,

God would deliver us from thousands of real troubles, besides the ten thousand vexations of our own making. He would increase our faith; and with it, our comfort. We go about complaining to one neighbour and another; O why is God the last thought of! Why do we not go forthwith, and tell him all our fears, and all our wants?

With prayer, praise should always be united. Indeed, there is something lacking in our prayers, if they do not lead to praise. If you would only study to cultivate holy cheerfulness, you would be amazed to see how many causes of thankfulness you have. Let me mention a few of them; and let us pause a little on each, and reflect:—

The following are some of our mercies—

That we were not long ago banished to eternal punishment.

That free and full salvation is offered to us through Christ Jesus.

That we may at all times ask for the great blessings of pardon, peace, holiness; and obtain them.

That we may feed upon the promises of God.

That we may cast our burden upon the Lord; assured that he will sustain us, and that he will never leave, never forsake us.

That God has made former afflictions profitable to our souls.

That if the worst come to the worst, yet we have hope! Hope is the "anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast." We may look forward to "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Surely these are infinite reasons for contentment, joy and thankfulness!

Perhaps you mourn over friends who are living an ungodly life. Remember, however—Are there none to whom you have been made useful? Perhaps you have been the means of converting some one, or you have helped forward the salvation of many immortal souls. Surely, if any of us have done this, we have cause for joy and gratitude to all eternity.

Then, at once renew your prayers and your praises. There are comforts for you, far exceeding all that you ever could have hoped for. "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding" is promised to you. The world cannot give you peace: your own heart cannot create peace: but God can. He promises, through Christ Jesus, to keep your heart like a fortified city, into which no enemy shall enter. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

PRAYER.

Blessed Lord, who in thy Son Jesus Christ hast opened to us the fountain of everlasting joy: We thankfully acknowledge this thine unspeakable gift. And we pray thee to establish our hearts by faith in Him, and grant us a peaceful assurance that Jesus is ours, and we are His, for ever.

But, O Lord, we must confess, that, through the infirmity of our sinful nature, we cannot always rejoice in thee, or praise thee as we ought. Many

times our souls are grievously bowed down by sorrow, affliction, or temptation: and our thoughts wander to and fro, forgetting their resting-place.

Merciful God, let the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, shine upon our hearts with beams of light and peace. Cheer us in our disconsolate and desponding hours; and never suffer us to repine or murmur against thee. Quiet our alarms, scatter our fears, supply our wants, and keep us in perfect peace, while casting all our care upon Thee, who carest for us.

Lord, have compassion on all who are in any trouble, whether of mind, body, or estate. Give them patience while they suffer. In thine own time and method deliver them; and cause them to sing aloud of thy goodness.

Hear us, O Lord, and make us joyful in thy salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XXXIV.

A HEAVENLY MIND, AND HOLY LIFE.

COLOSSIANS iii. 1—7.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

THE true believer in Christ is as a man risen from the dead: for by faith he obtains a new life from Christ. He is united to Christ: and what Christ is, that he is. Before his conversion, he was dead in trespasses and sins; but the Spirit of Christ, entering into him, has made him a living man.

O do you, who call yourself a Christian, examine whether your heart has been thus changed! For "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

It was by Almighty Power that Jesus burst open the grave, and rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. It is by the same Almighty Power that a sinner is raised from the death of sin, unto the life of righteousness.

And now his affections ascend towards heaven: for Christ, his Lord and Life, is there. He loves to draw nigh to him, in supplications and prayers. With the eye of faith he beholds the bleeding Lamb: he views the multitude of angels and saints around the throne: he wonders at the mystery of redeeming love: he begins to join in the everlasting song; and is ready to cry out, "Lord, I am thine, and Thou art mine for ever!"

It is not *at all times*, that the believer enjoys these heavenly delights. He is sadly distracted with worldly cares, and often hindered by temptations to sin. His soul is sometimes exceedingly heavy; at other times exceedingly foolish. But he desires

and tries to set his affection on things above. He cries out, "Oh, that my gracious Advocate, at God's right hand, would pity my infirmities, and put new life into my soul!" Nor does he cry in vain.

But his life is safely hid with Christ in God. It is a treasure, of which no enemy can rob him, so long as he dwells close to Christ. Therefore the Saviour has said, "Abide in me, and I in you. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Jesus therefore hears our prayers; and is ready to give us that spirit of love, which is the glory of heaven itself.

This life of faith, and this spirit of love, are not always seen by the believer. They are sometimes hidden, even from himself. Christ, indeed, is always near; but the believer does not always perceive him near. When, therefore, temptations to sin come in his way, he has great need to stir up his faith and love: for his business is, to mortify all sin. He has to deny all sinful affections, and to be very careful in governing even his lawful affections. He has daily to be putting off the old man, and putting on the new man. This cannot be done without the help of Christ. The very smallest victory over sin can be gained only by faith. When he contends against sin, then it is that he feels Christ most needful to him.

What a grievous thing is it, to think that even we should have walked and lived in any of those sinful lusts and worldly pleasures which the Apostle here condemns! Let us read the account of them over again, with shame and abhorrence: "Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concu-

piscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry!"—And have we *now* escaped from these pollutions, that are in the world through lust? And are we *now* living for heaven and for eternity?

Oh, the terrible state of those who are still children of disobedience! Think of those solemn words—"The wrath of God abideth on them!"

Think, too, of the Christian's blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ! Then shall believers be with Him in glory. They shall ascend to heaven: they shall enter into peace: no sin shall be there; no, nor even temptation to sin. "The Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes!"

PRAYER.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who art exalted to the right hand of the Father, to receive gifts, even for the rebellious: Mercifully hear and answer our prayer, while we ask for the influences of thy Holy Spirit. Pardon all our sins: renew us in the inner man: dwell thou in our hearts, by faith: give to us the hidden life, which comes from Thee; and let thy Holy Spirit be within us as a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life!

Sanctify, O Lord, every affection of our souls! May we love thee above all things: and in all things which thou givest us for our good, may we still love thee supremely. Cause us to walk all the day long in a childlike fear of offending thee; that no unholy

temper, or sinful practice of ours, may grieve thy Holy Spirit, or cause him to depart from us. Cheer our dim sight with a bright hope of those unspeakable joys, which thou hast prepared for them that love thee. Let thy peace, O Lord, rule in our hearts; and let the spirit of prayer and praise abound within us. So, Blessed Jesus, dwell in us, and walk in us, that, when we are called hence, we may welcome thy voice in our dying moments. And while thou sayest, Behold, I come quickly; cause our departing spirits humbly and gladly to answer Thee, Even so, come Lord Jesus!

XXXV.

DIRECTIONS CONCERNING PRAYER.

I THESSALONIANS V. 17.

Pray without ceasing.

IN words very few, but very weighty, St. Paul here exhorts us to the important duty of Prayer. Suffer me to show you what Prayer is: and then, what it is to pray without ceasing.

1. Prayer is the language of earnest desire. See how little infants cling to the mother's breast, seeking for the nourishment necessary to their life. Hark, how the young ravens cry for their food! These are Scripture emblems of a soul desiring grace from above; asking for pardon, and longing for the spirit of holiness.

This earnest desire distinguishes real prayer from

mere formal prayer. Some persons read or hear a prayer, merely because it is customary, or because they must. There is no heart in such petitions.

This spirit of fervent prayer can be obtained only through the influences of the Holy Ghost. Through him we receive "the spirit of grace, and of supplications."

Moreover, Prayer is a solemn confession that we depend on God for every blessing.

This we ought constantly to feel. Worldly people go on living without God. They take it for granted that they have a right to food, clothing, health, and every earthly good that they can get. But a true Christian knows that these things are, all of them, from the hand of God. He has the right to give, and also to take away. As humble believers, therefore, we should pray for just so much of this world's good, as our Heavenly Father may see fit to bestow on us. When we ask for any temporal blessing, we should add to our prayers some such words as these—"If the Lord will:" or, "If thou, Lord, seest this to be for my real good, and for thy glory."

When we are praying for spiritual blessings, the case is very different. Here we cannot pray too largely: for it is according to the will of God, that we should long for the greatest measures of grace. He says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

We have to pray for others, also, as well as for ourselves. The Apostle urgently recommends that we should be "praying always with all prayer and

supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." He exhorts also, that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." What abundant employment for our praying hours!

But in order that we may be accepted, we should pray in Faith: otherwise, we offend God, by losing sight of his promises. We trifle away the time that we spend upon our knees, if we do not approach Him in faith. Yea, we trifle with the precious doctrine of Christ's intercession. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us:" and shall we doubt, then, whether such an Advocate will be heard? How can we so dishonour our Redeemer?

Let us come, my friend, as it were, to Heaven's gate, and read this command and this promise written upon it: **KNOCK, AND IT SHALL BE OPENED UNTO YOU.** That gate will not be opened, if we knock in a doubting or half-hearted spirit. Some persons knock, as if they were almost afraid to be heard. This is not the way to enter heaven. We should, by prayer, knock loud and long. "Ask in faith, nothing wavering." "The kingdom of Heaven," says our Lord, "suffereth violence: and the violent take it by force."

2. But the precept goes yet further: we are to "pray without ceasing."

That is, we should pray regularly and frequently. We should likewise make every thing a matter of prayer. "In every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."

If we do this constantly, we shall easily understand that the command, to "pray without ceasing," does not require us to be always on our knees. Besides those times when we can conveniently pray in the closet, in the family, or in the congregation, there are thousands of times when we can, in a moment, send forth a short petition to the throne of grace. This is called, Ejaculatory prayer: the word "ejaculatory" means, "shooting forth arrows." To pray without ceasing, is to be so constantly in the spirit of prayer, that our heart shall be like a quiver filled with arrows;—always ready to dart forth a petition, a wish, a sigh, or a look, toward the mercy-seat. Only let the word of God and faith direct your prayers, and they will fly straight and swift to heaven.

In this way, you perceive that you may pray, unobserved, even in the midst of a crowd. Your soul may speak silently to God, and you may receive a gracious answer, while those nearest to you know nothing of the matter.

The Saints are continually praying in this manner: and they can truly say, like David, "It is good for me to draw near to God."

Remember, my friend, that as long as you are in the body, your wants will never cease: therefore, 'pray without ceasing.' Remember, also, that for wise reasons, and in order to try our faith, the Lord sometimes is pleased to delay answering our petitions: therefore "continue instant in prayer." And to this we must add patient waiting: indeed "prayer" is often called "waiting," or is coupled

with it, in Scripture. "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry." "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

PRAYER.

Lord, teach us to pray. Strengthen us by thy Holy Spirit, and enable us to pray without ceasing; to pray always, and not to faint; to continue in prayer, and watch thereunto with thanksgiving. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. O help our infirmities: take away our unbelief: draw our affections to things above; and fill us with such hearty desires and such holy assurance towards Thee, that we may never draw near to thy throne of grace without receiving a blessing.

We would remember, O Jesus, the strong crying and tears with which thou didst call upon God in the days of thy flesh, and didst prevail and overcome. O let us account it our shame and our loss, that we many times cannot watch with thee one hour. Suffer us not to remain so unmindful of our own wants, and the necessities of others. Stir us up to greater earnestness; that we may pray, not only because we are commanded to do so, but with the liveliest affections of the heart. Though it be long ere thou answer us, yet enable us to continue patiently waiting, and fervently longing, for the time when thou wilt have mercy upon us. O Lord, cast not out our prayer: but let thy loving-kindness come unto us, even unto us, O Lord, according to thy word, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

XXXVI.

QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 19.

Quench not the Spirit.

WHEN the Holy Ghost descended on the disciples, on the day of Pentecost, and gave them power to speak in a variety of languages, it is related, that there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. Then was fulfilled the prophecy of John the Baptist concerning Christ: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."

This gift of tongues was an extraordinary and miraculous gift. Yet even the ordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit may very properly be compared to fire: for the Spirit, by his teaching, gives light; by His sanctifying power He purifies; and by His comforting presence He warms and cheers the hearts of believers.

The Holy Ghost, therefore, being like a fire in the souls of those who are enlightened, sanctified, and comforted by His grace, we may see the fitness of this short precept, "Quench not the Spirit."

Let me press a few reflections on your mind, concerning this important subject.

1. First, then, as to the enlightening of the Holy Spirit, ask yourself this question—"Am I really taught by the Spirit of God Himself?" Perhaps you have gained some knowledge of Religion: has that knowledge been the fruit of reading the Scriptures, and of prayer? Have you followed on to

know the Lord, still reading the Bible, and praying earnestly for the teaching of the Holy Spirit?—It is perfectly amazing to observe the degree in which those are enlightened, who are led by the Spirit of God. By this teaching, even young converts grow rapidly in a short time. Their hearts are deeply touched: they give their most serious thoughts to Religion: they discover their own corruptions, and mourn over them: they learn the way of Justification by Faith: they feel the spirituality of God's Law, and the need of a new heart, that they may serve God fully. All this they learn with a surprising quickness, when they are taught of God.

Perhaps you have begun to taste these heavenly truths. O then, quench not this enlightening Spirit. Do not turn aside to vain janglings. Be not satisfied with mere head-knowledge. Be not puffed up. Bow down your ear to instruction. Be very humble, very diligent in reading the word, very frequent in prayer: and let all your knowledge turn to good account, in producing holiness.

2. Consider, now, another office of the Holy Ghost; which is, to sanctify and purify the heart. The earnest prayer of all who feel the Holy Ghost working on their souls is, "Oh that my ways were made so direct, that I might keep thy statutes!" "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord," is the work of the Spirit. He kindles holy desires, holy purposes, holy resolutions and vows, in the soul. He also purges out the dross of our old corruptions; purifying our souls, even as silver is tried and purified seven times in the fire.

Examine well, my friend, whether or no this holy fire burns in your soul. O if there be in you but the first sparks of grace, I entreat you, "Quench not the Spirit!" Beware of putting out that holy fire, by secretly inclining to sin, or by sparing any favourite lust, or corrupt feeling. Sensuality of every kind tends to quench the Spirit. So likewise do Pride, Envy, Wrath, and Malice. We cannot indulge any filthiness of the flesh or of the spirit, and at the same time have the Holy Ghost dwelling within us. To neglect prayer, is one certain way of grieving the Spirit; for it is prayer that draws down the Spirit of Christ: if, therefore, we are silent to Him, how can He be otherwise than silent to us? Trifling with religious convictions is another way of quenching the Spirit: oh, how careful should young converts be in this matter! So, indeed, should we all: for our growth in grace, and our eternal salvation, greatly depend on our following up every good feeling excited by the Holy Spirit.

3. Once more—Quench not the Holy Ghost in his office of Comforter. Look up to Him without any coldness or distrust. To look at a friend with doubt of his kindness, is chilling. Beware, then, of unbelief. Unbelief damps, if it do not quench, the Holy Spirit.—When you are afflicted, let Him come to you: do not chase Him away by murmurings.—When your heart is softened by the dews of the Spirit, then let the promises of God sink into your heart, and take deep root. Believe them, and enjoy them. Let the Holy Ghost shed abroad the love of Christ in your heart, and fill you with all joy and

peace in believing. Especially, beware of allowing sin to rest upon you: for this will grieve the Spirit, and banish his comforting presence from you, more than any thing else.

In short, without this Divine Teacher, Sanctifier, and Comforter, what could we, poor sinners, do? Without Him, we never could come to the Father through Christ—never pray—never be made wise unto salvation. With His guidance and help, the way to Heaven is plain. He is our pillar of fire in this dark wilderness. He will shine with his bright beams upon us, if we are willing to abide in his light. Therefore, grieve not your only Guide and Comforter. Quench not his grace. Let the spark glow into a burning heat, and let the kindling flame break forth into a fire.

PRAYER.

O Lord our Heavenly Father, thou art the Source of wisdom, holiness, and joy to us ignorant and miserable sinners. Thou, through thy dear Son, hast promised to teach, sanctify and comfort all those who come unto Thee through Him. Be it unto us, O Lord, according to thy word: shed abroad in our hearts the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that we may not abide in darkness, but may walk in the light of thy truth, and rejoice in thy salvation.

We would mourn and humble ourselves before thee, O merciful Father, on the remembrance of our many offences against thy Spirit. When He hath spoken, how often have we slighted his voice! He hath warned us, and we have not feared: He hath

invited us, and we have not come: He hath been striving with us, and yet we have not yielded: He hath chastened us, and we have refused correction. We have rebelled and grieved thy Holy Spirit, O Lord: and yet we are spared, and permitted to renew our prayers for that great gift, which we have so shamefully neglected! O then bestow on us, for thine own free mercy's sake, a large measure of the grace of thy Blessed Spirit. That which we know not, teach thou us. The evil, that still cleaves to us, do thou thoroughly purge out; and take away all our dross. And O grant that we may so walk in thy fear, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, that we may glorify thy Name before all men, and may be the means of bringing others into the same bonds of holy and happy union and fellowship with Thee, through our Mediator and Redeemer, Christ Jesus: to whom, with Thee and the Holy Spirit, be glory and praise, now and for ever. Amen.

XXXVII.

THE FAITHFUL SAYING.

1 TIMOTHY i. 15, 16.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

WHEN we read the Bible, it is a great comfort to know that it is all true. The Bible was given to us by God himself, who cannot lie.

The faithful saying which God has given in it, concerning his Son Jesus Christ, is the most precious that can possibly be spoken to us miserable sinners. If we had no faithful saying, like this, we should live and die without hope. Let us welcome the glad tidings, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners!"

When He came into the world, he did not come into it because it was a happy place; but because it was a miserable place, full of sin. He did not come to enjoy it: but to die for it, and that the world through Him might be saved. And whosoever believeth in Him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

Do *you* believe in Him? Do you feel that you *want* a Saviour? Do you feel the burden of your sins? Do you feel like a sick man, that needs a Physician? If you feel this, you will be ready to come to Christ, and cry out, "Lord, heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee!" And he will not cast out your prayer.

Perhaps you think yourself too great a sinner to be pardoned. But he is ready to save even the chief of sinners. The vilest may come, and remind Him of his own promise, how he said, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

Many think that great sinners are the hardest to save. Yet these are often the first to come to Christ. And he delights in showing his Almighty power, by saving to the uttermost.

St. Paul is a pattern to us. He was a monument of grace, set up to be looked at throughout all generations, in order that all may be assured of the

pardoning love of Christ. As he was forgiven, so may we be.

Have *you* ever persecuted the godly? St. Paul had once been a persecutor. Have you hated the Gospel? Have you disliked the house of God? Have you been unkind to pious people? Have you been living after the course of this world, serving divers lusts and pleasures? Still, if you turn to God, and believe in His Son Jesus Christ, he is ready to deliver you from all your sins, to blot them out, and to save your soul with an everlasting salvation.

PRAYER.

O Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth: Blessed be thy name, that ever we heard the glad tidings of the Gospel! While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us: and still He is ever ready to seek and to save them that are lost.

Have mercy upon us, O Lord, though we are the chief of sinners! Pardon us, if ever we have hindered thy Gospel, slighted thy Ministers, or persecuted thy people. Let our lot now be with thy children; and give us the blessing of pardon, and of peace with thee our God. Enable us, also, to bring others to know and love this gracious Saviour. Open our mouths, that we may speak his praises, and tell others what he hath done for our souls. We ask these mercies for the glory of thy name, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

XXXVIII.

EARLY PIETY.

2 TIMOTHY i. 1—5.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice: and I am persuaded that in thee also.

THE early piety of Timothy is often set before young people, as an encouragement to serve the Lord sometimes. The subject may be useful, not to the Young only; but also to Parents, and to all who have the charge of Youth. May the good Spirit of God help us in meditating on the character of this young saint!

1. It is worthy of remark, that Timothy enjoyed, from his earliest youth, great advantages for becoming pious. His grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice, are mentioned as eminent believers: they had "faith unfeigned:" not a mere profession, nor merely a small degree of faith; but faith of the most pure and genuine kind. What a blessing is it, to have sprung from pious parents! Devout mothers, too—what influence may they have in forming the temper of their sons and daughters, while yet in tender years. The hand of the mother does more towards shaping the habits and character of the little

children than is often thought of. She is much at home: her province is, to "guide the house;" while the father may be necessarily absent, for many hours, on his business. She watches the temper of the little-ones: she sees closely how the servants or neighbours speak to them: she minds how the brothers and sisters behave towards one another: she may often (if she have grace to govern herself) govern them all by a word, or even by a look. She may teach her children their Bible-verses: she may sing their favourite hymns with them: she may hear them repeat their short prayers, quietly and seriously: she has her little rewards and her little punishments; and these, when wisely administered, work wonders with little children. She may herself be to them a pattern of sweet temper, patience, and good order. Thus she may "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The grandmother is no longer so able to bear the heavy domestic cares, as a young mother is: yet she may often put in a kind look, and drop a word of good advice. She may hear the grandchildren read, as soon as they are able: and she may tell them religious stories, which will be fixed in their memories as long as they live.

It was thus, we may suppose, that Lois and Eunice helped to train Timothy. "From a child he knew the Holy Scriptures."

We may learn, from Titus ii. 3—6, what their character must have been. Aged Lois was in behaviour as becometh holiness. Eunice was a lover of her children, a keeper at home, an honour to the

Gospel. Timothy had the benefit of their prayers, their counsel and their example; and thus he grew up a sober-minded, solid, pious young man.

But, beside this, Timothy had the great advantage of being early introduced to the notice of the holy Apostle Paul. It is one of the wisest things that parents can do, to bring their sons and daughters into the company of valued servants of God. And zealous Ministers of Christ, when visiting in a family, should cast about in their thoughts how to say something which may lodge in the hearts of the young: not making too much of them, which only spoils young people, by rendering them vain and forward; but dropping a word here and there, to please and profit them; seasoning gravity with cheerfulness.

2. Observe next, what excellent use Timothy, by God's grace, made of his religious advantages.

First, we observe that his heart was tender: it was good soil, in which the word of God took root. It was softened with the early dew of grace. St. Paul says, that he was mindful of the tears of Timothy. Tears are, indeed, natural to youth, and not always to be depended on, as proofs of piety. Religion is a subject so solemn, so affecting, that some are soon moved by it to weep. Thus, eager friends may sometimes think their children's hearts are changed, when it is only their affections that are wrought upon. But the tears of Timothy were genuine; as was afterwards proved by his stedfast faith and love.

He had faith to be saved—faith in Christ, to whom he committed his soul. And he had faith to follow

Christ with the same courage that St. Paul displayed. The Apostle, therefore, could confidently address him in these words—"BE NOT THOU ASHAMED of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel, according to the power of God." Timothy was strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Thus was this young warrior brought up to be thoroughly like-minded with St. Paul. In due season he was ordained to preach the Gospel, and became a chief ruler in the Church.—How fervently and affectionately did the Apostle pray for him, night and day! How greatly did he desire to see him, that he might be filled with joy! St. Paul, when he wrote this Epistle to Timothy, was a "prisoner of the Lord," at Rome. Next to the consolations of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, his chief delight seems to have sprung from remembering his own true son in the faith, the beloved Timothy.

HAVING noticed the value of early Bible-Education, let me add a few remarks—which may be read at another time—to show that there is scarcely a temper, good or bad, manifested by children, but Scripture gives us some text, or story, to meet it.

Thus, taking Bad dispositions first:—Are children envious and unkind? Let them hear the story of Joseph and his brethren. Are they angry and violent? Remind them of Cain and Abel. Thievish? Read concerning Achan—Joshua vii. Cunning? Let them learn by heart Psalm cxxxix. Idle? Read Proverbs xxiv. 30—34. Prone to lying? The awful

story of Ananias and Sapphira should be solemnly read to them—Acts v. 1—11. Disposed to Sabbath-breaking? See the story of the young man gathering sticks on that day—Numbers xv. 32—36. Disobedient to Parents? What a death did Absalom die!—2 Samuel xviii. 9—17. Proud? Read Christ's remarks concerning a little child, Matthew xviii. 1—4.

Or, on the other hand, do children manifest Good dispositions, the buddings—it may be—of grace? Are they hopeful, dutiful, &c.? Study Samuel's early history—Samuel ii. 18, 19, 26. iii. 1—10. Have they a tender conscience? Mark Josiah's character—2 Kings xxii. 18, 19. Are they fond of the Bible? Timothy is their pattern—2 Tim. iii. 14, 15. Are they inclined to private prayer? David and Daniel are their example—Psalm xix. 14. Daniel vi. 10, 11. Are they simple-hearted and conscientious? How delightful will it be to study the character of Nathanael, as portrayed by our Lord himself—John i. 47. Do they grow in all lovely graces? It must have come from copying the example of Christ: "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour both with God and man." See also Philipians iv. 8.

Thus, when reading their Bibles, pious parents will find fruitful topics in abundance, for the good of their dear children.

PRAYER.

We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what thou didst in their days, in the times of old. Thou hast never left thyself without witness, and thou hast declared thyself, in Christ Jesus, rich in mercy unto all that call upon thee.

Thou showest mercy unto thousands, in them that love thee and keep thy commandments. Thou rememberest thy covenant for ever, the word that thou hast commanded to a thousand generations.

Thou, O Lord, art specially gracious to the families that call upon thy name: thou watchest over them for good, and coverest their dwelling with the shadow of thy wings. Look in mercy upon us, O Lord: hear our prayers on behalf of ourselves, and of all that are most dear to us. Give to each one of us—the aged and the young—thy saving grace. Build up our families, that they may be made part of the great household of faith—that family in heaven and earth, which is named after the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Save us from wrath through him. Sanctify us, that we may be an habitation of God through the Spirit. Let not one of us fail of the grace of God: and in that day when thou, O Lord, shalt make up thy jewels, may we all be owned as thy children, and dwell before thee for ever.

We thank thee, Heavenly Father, for all the religious privileges which we possess, and which have freely come to us through thy gift. We bless thee especially for thy Holy Word—the friend of our youth, the guide of our life, and the comfort of our age. Oh, may it never depart from us: but may it be in our heart, and may we teach it diligently to our children. Enlighten us by the preaching of thy Gospel, that glory may dwell in our land. Let thy word be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

XXXIX.

OUR COMPASSIONATE SAVIOUR,

HEBREWS iv. 14—16.

Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

For we have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

It was the office of the Jewish High Priest, to offer up sacrifices to God for the sins of the people; and this he did daily. Besides this, once in the year he used to enter into a part of the temple, called "The Holy of Holies;" and there he made a most solemn atonement for the sins of the whole congregation.

By these actions, he showed forth the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, who once for all, on the cross, shed his precious blood for the sins of the whole world. Having done this, Jesus passed into the heavens. There, in that Holiest of Holies, He is set down on the right hand of God, ever living to make intercession for us.

Let me ask now, in his own words, "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" Do *you* own Jesus for your Saviour, and your God? Do you feel what a perishing sinner you are, without Him? Do you tremble to think, that the load of your sins will sink you into hell, unless you lay hold of the hand which He stretches out to save you? Do you love this Saviour; and are you heartily desiring to live to His

glory?—Unless you can say “Yes,” to these questions, you have no part in Christ.

But—if you do come to Him with the feeling of a broken-hearted sinner; if you do believe in Him as your redeeming God; if you do pray to Him; and if you endeavour to live to His glory, then Jesus is your Friend. And He is such a friend, that you will never find another like Him, to help and comfort you.

When Jesus was on earth, He suffered hunger and thirst, cold and heat, weariness and sleeplessness: He suffered shame and sorrow, temptation from Satan, and contradiction from sinners: nay, He suffered agony and death, that he might save us from the bitter pains of eternal death. Now that he is risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, He still feels for all true believers. He calls them the members of his body. He is the Head, and feels what every member suffers.

Are you suffering great pain, and sickness, and weakness of body? Think what Jesus suffered on the cross for you! If you could only, by faith, see the agonies which he endured to save you, you would never think that you have one pain too many. Nay, you would be thankful for pain, if it brought you nearer to the bosom of your Saviour.

Do you suffer from pinching poverty? Remember the account which Jesus gave of his own life; and be comforted, by knowing that He feels for all your distresses. He said, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.”—And has He put into our lips the petition, “Give us this day our daily

bread;” and will He not give us bread? Alas! we pray with too little faith in His love.

Are you deserted by friends, and left alone? So was Jesus. But he says, “And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” And you may say the same; feeling, by faith, that Jesus is with you. He is a real Friend; a never-failing Friend.

Is your soul vexed with the scoffs of the ungodly, who ridicule or persecute you, because you love Christ? Then, look unto Jesus, and “consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” He is the Good Shepherd, and will not suffer the wolf to devour his tender lambs.

Are you mourning for the death of those you love? Read the eleventh chapter of St. John’s Gospel, and see how the Saviour feels for those that are bereaved. When Mary and Martha mourned for their brother Lazarus, “Jesus wept.”

Are you tempted? Jesus also was tempted, “yet without sin.” He knows all your infirmities, both of body and soul; and “is able to succour them that are tempted.”

Only come to Him with earnest, believing prayer. The way to the throne of grace is open night and day. Trust in him, and pour out your heart before him. Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity. When temptation presses you sore, yet, in the strength of Christ, fight on; and sin shall not get the victory over you. When the remembrance of past sin sinks you very low, cry to Jesus; and He will stretch forth his arm, to deliver your soul from the nethermost

hell. Even when you are dying, He can, and will, give comfort to the contrite and humble. You may say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." Come, then, to Jesus! not only when it is well with you, but when you are at the very worst. Come boldly! and you shall obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need.

PRAYER.

Behold us, O blessed Jesus! drawing nigh unto thee, and lifting up the voice of our humble supplications, trusting in thy Name alone. Bow down thine ear, while we plead all that thou didst suffer, in our nature, to bring us unto God. Though thou wast rich, yet thou didst become poor, that we, through thy poverty, might be rich. Thou didst know hunger and thirst, toil and weariness and painfulness: thou wast a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; deserted by friends, and enduring the contradiction of sinners against thyself: and all this even unto death. Thou didst bear the temptations of Satan, and the hidings of thy Father's face. What sorrow of ours can be compared to thy sorrow? Ours are light afflictions, and but for a moment: and they are shared by Thee.

Yet, O our pitying Saviour! thou seest that to us every chastening is, for the present, grievous. Thou knowest our frame: thou rememberest that we are but dust. Suffer us not to be swallowed up of overmuch sorrow, nor to faint in the day of adversity.

Stand by us, and help us. Give us the consolations of thy Spirit, and the comfort of thy love. Be present with us in the furnace of affliction; and say to our sinking hearts, Lo, I am with you! Bestow upon us more abundantly the spirit of grace and of supplication; that in all our troubles we may make our request known unto thee; and evermore feel that the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, is able to keep our hearts and minds, calmly rejoicing, and safely established in thee, Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

XL.

PERSEVERANCE.

HEB. x. 35—39.

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

BEGINNERS in Religion are usually very zealous, and very hardy. They feel ready to make the greatest exertions, and to endure the severest trials, for the love of Christ. But when they find, day after day, year after year, new duties and fresh difficulties coming before them, their warmth often cools, and they are tempted to grow faint and weary. Nay

more—unless they be rooted and grounded in Christ, they are in danger of returning to the world, yielding to the flesh, and drawing back unto perdition.

Believers, therefore, when fainting, should be animated to perseverance. To this end, they should be led to cry earnestly unto God, beseeching him to establish their souls, by Faith and Patience. Let me offer a few remarks on these two graces, which are the very sinews of Perseverance.

1. Faith is a grace inestimably precious. It is as a hand laying hold on all the blessings of the Gospel. Faith claims the atoning blood of Christ, for the pardon of sin: and through believing prayer it is that we obtain from the Spirit grace to sanctify our souls. Thus the just are said to “live by faith.”—Now this faith it is, which the Apostle counsels us never to cast away. “Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.”—When first we joined ourselves to the people of God, was it not with a firm and confident trust in Jesus? Did we not believe in Him as able and willing to redeem us from all evil, and bring us safe to heaven at last? Why then should we ever part with that confident hope? Is heaven the less sure, because we have to struggle through many trials to reach it? Do we expect to conquer by a single battle? No—“We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” Or, did we suppose that our Saviour would immediately take us to glory? Were we to finish our course with joy, all at once? If Christ tarries, are we to be weary of Him? If He seems even to hide himself for a little season, shall the eye

of faith lose sight of Him? Far otherwise! We should account Him faithful, who hath promised: for He is just as faithful now, as He was when we first believed on Him. His title is—“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.”

2. But, in order that we may hold out to the end, we have need of Patience, as well as Faith. The Lord exercises his believing people with a great variety of afflictions; some of them very bitter to the flesh. But these trials, coming from God himself, and for wise purposes, should be borne patiently. Thus St. Peter reminds us: his words are—“Though now for a season, if needs be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

There can be no trial of our Patience, without times of suffering. Look at the sufferings of the first Christians. St. Paul says, “Ye endured a great fight of afflictions: partly whilst ye were made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.” What they suffered, we may be called to suffer. Let us then join this blessed company of the early believers. Let us seek for strength patiently to endure, like them, whatever Jesus appoints. Their sufferings have long since ended in glory: and ours will soon end in like manner, if we boldly follow those who now through faith and patience inherit the promises.

To the eye of sense, the time of suffering always appears long. But to the eye of faith even a long life, spent in the most severe afflictions, ought to appear but as a moment. And such it does appear, when faith is strong and lively. So the Apostle expresses himself in another place: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: while we look not on the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

O, then, view the near approach of Jesus, bearing a crown of glory in his hand; a crown, which he is ready to place on thy head, O afflicted saint, if thou art found faithful unto death! "Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." If weariness and fretfulness begin to work, then—just as the nurse quiets a moaning child—let us calm our spirit with these words, "Yet a little while: only a little while!" Thus let Patience have her perfect work. Thus let us persevere, till we obtain the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

PRAYER.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sakes didst take our nature upon thee, and wast made perfect through sufferings: We bless thy Name, that we have been called to follow Thee, in company with that little flock, to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom. Enable us, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to lay hold of eternal life; and through

faith in Thee to continue stedfast, even unto the end. As we pass through the temptations of this present evil world, O leave us not, neither forsake us, thou God of our salvation!

Heavenly Father, suffer us not through an evil heart of unbelief to depart from thee, the living God. Help us to cleave unto thee, with full purpose of heart. Strengthen us to run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. And grant that, being found faithful unto death, we may finally receive at thy hands the crown of everlasting life, through the merits of the same thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XLI.

VISIT TO THE AFFLICTED.

HEBREWS xii. 5—13.

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but

grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Wherefore, lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way: but let it rather be healed.

THIS beautiful passage of Scripture teaches us how to bear afflictions patiently, and how even to bless God for them. When I sit near any one who is deeply afflicted, I have need to pray for grace, that I may speak to him wisely, and comfortably. You are now suffering: it behoves you to ask, What is the voice of God in this visitation?

Observe, then, that the words of the Apostle are addressed to the children of God; so that the first thing you should inquire into, is, Whether *you* are of that number?

Many sick and suffering people say—"I hope I am a child of God: if suffering makes a child of God, sure enough I am one. I hope God is not punishing me as an enemy: I know I am a sinner; but I hope he will make allowance for me, on account of my sufferings. Surely he must pity me at last, if he lays such heavy sufferings upon me now. And as my trials are so great in this life, I hope I shall be better off in another world. Still, it is impossible not to complain sometimes, and to think that God deals rather hardly with me."

Now, these are the thoughts that come into the mind of some persons, when they are afflicted. Is it your way of thinking, my friend? If so, there must be something wrong. I should be unwilling to cause you sorrow upon sorrow; but I entreat you

to let me speak faithfully on this question, "What is it to be a child of God?"

1. The true child of God knows that he cannot pay off the debt of sin with his sufferings. He feels that his sins deserve infinite and eternal punishment: how then can his light sufferings do away his dreadful guilt? He knows that even the sufferings of hell cannot pay off the sinner's debt; for the sinner, once lost, goes on suffering for ever and ever. Neither can our sorrow for sin do any good, unless it leads us to Christ, to obtain pardon and the gift of a new heart.

2. Further, the true child of God is instructed in this blessed truth, that the punishment of his sins has already been borne by Jesus the Son of God, when he died upon the cross.

3. Therefore, he welcomes Christ by faith. He is united to Christ by faith. He has pardon, peace, and the gift of a new heart, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. His own sufferings have nothing to do with gaining that pardon: the price of his redemption is already paid, by the most precious blood-shedding and death of Jesus Christ. If we attempt to add any thing to Christ's sacrifice, we make it of no effect. Christ must save, and Christ alone.

Why, then, you ask, are afflictions sent to the children of God, when their Father loves them so tenderly?

1. They are sent to bring our sins to our remembrance; and, to make us watchful against present temptation, and the unsuspected evil of our hearts.

"Let us search, and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord."

2. They are sent also to keep us near to Christ, that we may depend on Him alone; that we may love him more, setting our affections on things above, and longing to be with him for ever in heaven; where the children of God will be made entirely like their Heavenly Father, and will see him as he is. Affliction is the furnace, in which the gold is purified: by means of this furnace faith is made stronger, and love more pure and fervent.

3. Another use of Affliction is, to wean us from the world. When our earthly comforts are shaken, we see how poor they are—how utterly insufficient to satisfy our immortal souls. The heart then sighs out—"And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee."

4. Afflictions are sent, also, to teach us to pity others. The afflicted child of God may say, "How many are there that have no Comforter, as I have; no Bible; no friendly Visitor; no knowledge of the Saviour! How many live and die without God, and without hope! Father of mercies, have pity on them! Show me what I can do for them! Tell me what I should say to them! Teach me to pray for them all! I must not be so selfish, as to think only of my own sufferings. All the world is suffering around me: I know where peace may be found: multitudes know nothing of the way of peace. Oh that I had more of the compassionate mind of Christ!"

These are the chief uses of sorrow. There is also this further use—Affliction sometimes is the first thing that brings us to God. And is not this a

blessed use of our troubles? So the Psalmist says, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word."

But you are weary: we will speak more of this another time. Enough has been said at present, I hope, to lead you to pray that your affliction may be blest to you, so that you may say, with the Psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

PRAYER.

Wherefore should a living man complain, O Lord; a man, for the punishment of his sins? We acknowledge our transgressions: we desire to humble ourselves, and be sorry for our sins. But, blessed be thy Name! the condemnation of sin is taken away, Christ having become a curse for us. Grant, that, being reconciled unto thee, through Him, we may walk before thee as dear children; and receive all thy chastenings, as tokens of a Father's love. Work in our souls more humility, watchfulness, and dependence on thee. Hold us by thy hand continually, and keep us near to thee. Take away the remaining dross out of our hearts; and cause our faith and good works so to shine before men, that they, seeing our tribulations and our hope in Thee, may glorify thy holy Name.

Endue us, also, with the tender and merciful spirit of Him, who came to visit this miserable world, and to give his life a ransom for many. Cause us, like Jesus, to weep over sinners, who are far from thee. Pity all that are in misery; all prisoners and captives; all widows and orphans; the stranger, and

the outcast; the sick, and the dying. Have mercy, O Lord, upon the nations that are yet sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death. Send out to them thy light and thy truth; and be evermore with those thy faithful servants, who are preaching in distant lands the unsearchable riches of Christ. Deliver them from every temptation: comfort them in every affliction: strengthen them for their work: favour them with success; and finally give them the crown of glory, which fadeth not away.

We ask these mercies, for ourselves and others, in the name of our adorable Redeemer, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XL.

VISIT TO THE AFFLICTED. (*Continued.*)

HEBREWS xii. 5—13. See Page 147.

How kindly does the Lord speak to his afflicted children, when he says, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, neither faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

It is to be lamented, however, that even the children of God do not always lay fast hold of the comforts which properly belong to them. When afflictions come upon them, they are seized with a sudden confusion: they do not at once perceive that it is the gentle rod of their father; and, by their distress, they show that they "have forgotten the exhortation, which speaketh unto them as unto children."

It is also to be observed, that there are these two corruptions of our heart drawn out, and brought to view, by our afflictions. If the chastening be light, we are ready to despise it; we think we can bear it by ourselves, and that it is scarcely worth attending to: this is our pride. But when God strikes harder and harder, then our spirit faints under his rebuke: this is our unbelief. First, we hold out against God, as long as we can; and next, when we can endure no longer, we murmur, faint, and sink into despondency.

Oh, what a thing is man! What a poor creature is even the best child of God, when he is for a moment forgetful of his Heavenly Father!

My friend, if you know Christ as your Saviour, you will say, at the first approach of sorrow, "This affliction must not be lost upon me: it is for my profit: at present it seems light: but I will bless the Lord for giving me warning." Then again, if you are suffering sorrow upon sorrow, but can look up to Christ as your compassionate Saviour and Comforter, you will pray, from the heart, "Let this affliction, heavy as it is, draw me nearer to Him whom my soul loveth! The eternal God is my refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Earthly joys are going away farther and farther: let heavenly consolations abound! I would not have my troubles either fewer, or lighter, than God pleases. Not because I think that they will take away my sins: Christ alone can do that. But, in the house of mourning, Jesus is more near, more friendly and tender, in applying His promises to my soul. Here

I see him, hear him, and feel him present, and speak to him more freely."

It would be most melancholy, to have no afflictions. Had we none, we might doubt whether we were children of God; "for what son is he, whom the father chasteneth not?"

Truly, it is one of the kindest things that a father can do for his son, to chasten him betimes: and children, that grow up in godliness, will thank their parents for having corrected them when they were young; even though they may, in some instances, have shown many infirmities, in their way of bringing them up.

But our Heavenly Father, when he chastens us, does it with perfect love, and perfect wisdom. He is like a refiner, sitting by the furnace, purifying the gold. He raises the furnace to its proper heat: he will not consume the gold, but only purges out the dross. What! can you not trust His wisdom, faithfulness, and love? O lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees! Think of those who have suffered the deepest afflictions before you, and yet the Lord hath delivered them out of all. "Take, my brethren, the Prophets, who have spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

And, if sorrows are multiplied, and all the dispensations of God seem darker and darker, so that heart and flesh begin to fail; still put thy trust

in God. Shut the outward eye to all the things of this world: open the eye of faith, to behold things unseen and eternal. Look far beyond the valley of the shadow of death. O fix thy affections on the kingdom of perfect joy, and peace, and love; where "thy sun shall no more go down; where the Lord shall be thy everlasting light; and the days of thy mourning shall be ended!"

PRAYER.

O thou Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, we are not worthy of the least of all the mercy, and of all the truth, which thou hast shown unto thy servants. But, alas! how soon do we forget thy favours, whenever new afflictions come upon us! How soon do we murmur against the Most High, and forget all his loving-kindnesses, as though they were utterly gone for evermore!

Lord, it is our infirmity and our sin, that we are so ready to sink into unbelief; even doubting Thy love. Pardon the sin of this ungrateful spirit; and cast it out, by the gracious influence of thy Holy Spirit. Show to us the things which are freely given unto us in Christ. Thou hast sealed to us the covenant of pardon and peace, through His blood: bestow on us also, for His sake, the spirit of adoption, whereby we may cry, Abba, Father. Shed abroad in our hearts thy love: fill us with all joy and peace in believing; and make us to abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

And whensoever any new tribulation shall come upon us, teach us to cast all our burden upon thee.

Look upon our affliction and our pain, and forgive us all our sins. Uphold us with thy free Spirit. Let patience have her perfect work: and do Thou perfect that which concerneth us. Father, not our will, but Thine, be done! And raise us at length to thy glorious seat above, where the redeemed of the Lord shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

We ask these great mercies through the prevailing Name of thy dear Son; to whom, with thyself, O Father, and the Holy Ghost, we would ascribe glory throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

XLI.

PATIENCE HAVING HER PERFECT WORK.

JAMES i. 2—4.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

ST. JAMES, in addressing the afflicted, speaks with a most kind and brotherly spirit. He begins—"My brethren:" as though he had said—"We are brethren indeed: ye are my fellow-labourers, and fellow-sufferers in Christ Jesus."

He knew, however, that there is scarcely any sinful temper so common as Impatience; scarcely any one, for which we so readily make excuses—at least, in our own case. Yet, in truth, an impatient mind is altogether contrary to the Gospel, the very opposite of the spirit of Christ.

Every disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus would gladly root out of his breast the spirit of impatience. Why should we refuse to bear that cross, which our Saviour appoints for us? Rather, let us count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations—or trials. Is it not an honour to be called to follow Christ?

St. James then gives this plain admonition—"Let patience have her perfect work." If it were necessary for our health that a surgeon should apply sharp instruments to a diseased limb of our body, and if, when he had partly performed his operation, we were to cry out to him to stop, in what a wretched state should we be—our body mangled, not healed! To do us real good, he must be allowed to finish his task completely, however painful to us it may be. So is it with affliction. Since our Divine Physician thereby intends to do good to our souls, patience must have her perfect work. We must go through the whole course of trial, that we may be "perfect, and entire, wanting nothing."

You may naturally ask, then—On what is Patience grounded? and how may it be strengthened? I will mention two or three considerations, tending to cherish this grace.

1. First, the Sufferer should look at the *Hand* which sends the affliction. Oh, how does it quiet the soul, to think, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good"! Patience springs out of faith. Do we believe in God, that he hath reconciled us to himself by the death of his Son? Do we love him as children love a Father; and are we assured that

he loves us? Do we believe that affliction is his chastening rod? Genuine believers know that tribulations are sent of God, on purpose to try their faith. Have *we* faith enough to see the hand of a Father in all our afflictions? Can we say, like David, "I was dumb; I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it!"

2. Then again, the Sufferer should look at the present *Benefit* of Affliction: and this to a believer is unspeakably great. Affliction is a furnace, to purify his graces, to increase his holiness, to make him die to the world, and to bring his heart into closer communion with Jesus.—An afflicted child of God may quietly reason thus within himself: "Here is an affliction sent me by God: but is He not accompanying it with a gracious revival of my soul? Here is a bitter cup of trial administered to me: but is there not mercy mingled with it? Why then art thou cast down, O my soul; and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

3. Once more, let the Sufferer look to the *End* of his afflictions. How beautifully does St. James speak of this, in the case of Job! He says: "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." "The Lord," even in this life, "blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning." Our All-wise God may perhaps see good, not to bless us in this life, as he did his servant Job; but, oh, what glory will it be to hear it said of us, in the Last

Great Day, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!"

Therefore, "let patience have her perfect work." Hear the words contained in this Epistle of St. James, a few verses further—"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

PRAYER.

O Lord, who in thine infinite wisdom hast called us both to obey thy commands, and also to suffer whatever thou layest upon us: Have compassion upon thy frail and feeble servants, strengthening us by thy grace, and enabling us to make thy will our pleasure and delight. Help us, by faith, to see thy hand in every dispensation. Keep us from the sin of murmuring: let us not rebel against thy purposes, or fret ourselves in any wise to do evil. But let thy Holy Spirit, O blessed Jesus, rule in our hearts, making us meek and lowly, and subduing every thought of our souls into a cheerful obedience to thy will.

Suffer us not, O Lord, to sink under our afflictions, or to be weary of thy corrections. As tribulations abound, so much the more may our faith and hope increase, that patience may have her perfect work. Yea, finish, O Lord, thine own purposes of mercy on our behalf. However sorely we may be tried here below, make all things work together for the good of our souls. And do Thou graciously

receive us at length into thy kingdom of peace and joy and glory, where there shall be no more pain, neither sorrow nor crying: and where thou, O Heavenly Father, wilt wipe away all tears from our eyes. Hear us, we beseech thee, for the sake of Him who suffered and died and rose again, that we might die unto sin and live unto God through Him, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XLII.

THE GIFT OF WISDOM.

JAMES I. 5—8.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

ONE of the first proofs of wisdom is, to discover our ignorance: and the more we grow in wisdom, the more humble shall we be, on account of our natural foolishness.

Of ourselves we cannot know God: we cannot see the beauty of the Gospel: we cannot understand the work of the Spirit of Christ: we cannot read the Bible aright: we do not even know what we should pray for as we ought. Things spiritual and eternal are the great things which we need most of all; and yet, of ourselves, we cannot understand them. What poor blind creatures, then, are we by nature!

But besides this, there are many cases continually happening, in which we need special wisdom. Even when we are truly desirous of serving God, yet we want, as it were, a spiritual education. Properly to govern the thoughts of the heart, requires constant wisdom. To order our conversation aright among men, requires a holy discernment. Solomon says, "I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as much as light excelleth darkness." This light is what our souls need.

The whole Book of Proverbs is full of remarks on the subject of wisdom. Blessed are they who study that book, from youth to age!

Where, then, may wisdom be found?—Let me suppose that you, my friend, are anxiously desirous of obtaining this gift. It may be that you are but a beginner in religion: or you are just now entering on some weighty business, or forming some important connection: or possibly you are already engaged in family cares or public duties, which require much prudence and thoughtfulness; and you feel your stock of knowledge to be very small, and almost spent. Now the question is—How may you obtain a seasonable supply of wisdom to direct you?

The answer is as clear as the day—From God. He is the Father of Lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. He is the fountain of wisdom. Go to him in prayer, every day, every hour, when you feel a difficulty; and wisdom shall be given you. What can be plainer than this promise—"He giveth unto all men liberally, and upbraideth not."

Perhaps you think that God will have little pity on you, because you have so often slighted his offers, and followed your own devices. It is mournful indeed, to think how often we have forgotten Him. Still God will not upbraid us, if we sincerely humble ourselves and repent. In many things we have all acted foolishly, inconsiderately, and perversely. Yet, all this notwithstanding, God giveth wisdom liberally, and upbraideth not.

But remember—we must ask in faith; nothing wavering, nothing doubting. Faith must fix its eye on God: then God, by his Spirit, will direct our hearts in wisdom.—And let me ask: Is not God worthy to be believed? Has he given us his promises, that we should take them up doubtfully, or by halves? He has given his own dear Son to die for us: can we doubt any longer, then, whether he is able and willing to give us wisdom through Christ? Oh, no: Unbelief, after all this, would be sin, as well as folly.

Faith in God brings this great benefit, that it fixes the heart in a wise and holy course, and keeps it stedfast. With a double-minded man all is just the contrary. His prayers help him not at all. He will not believe in God: and he finds none else to trust in. He cannot even trust himself; for he finds his opinions continually shifting. In this distressing state, he may go first to one person, then to another; first to one book, then to another; first to one place, then to another: but he settles nowhere. He is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind, and tossed in every direction. Every wind of doctrine blows him aside, into some new course.

It is quite pitiable to see how some persons are constantly shifting and changing. Do you ask the reason of it? It springs from the want of wisdom. And whence this want of wisdom? It arises from want of prayer, or from praying without faith.

Let us, therefore, pray *for* faith: and when we have faith, let us continue praying *in* faith. “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Learn Solomon's prayer; very short, yet very full. His prayer to God was—GIVE ME WISDOM!

“And it pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.”

PRAYER.

Almighty God, the fountain of wisdom, the giver of every good and perfect gift: Look down in compassion upon us, thy poor unworthy creatures, who of ourselves know nothing as we ought to know. We have erred from thy ways, like lost sheep: nor can we ever return to thee, unless thy Gracious Spirit be pleased to enlighten our minds and direct our steps. Pardon, O Lord, our many sinful wanderings: pity the blindness and dulness of our hearts: and shine into them with the light of thy glorious Gospel. That which we know not, teach thou us: incline our hearts unto thy testimonies, and quicken thou us in thy way.

O thou who hast promised to give liberally, to them that ask of thee in faith: Increase our faith, and draw out the desires of our souls after the teaching of thy Holy Spirit. When we are in

darkness, be Thou our light: when we know not what to do, be Thou near to us, O Jesus, our good Shepherd, with thy friendly voice, saying, This is the way, walk in it. Lord, teach us to know thy voice: keep us from self-will and presumption: deliver us from error, folly, and sin: guide us in safety and comfort. All our wants and all our weaknesses are known unto thee: bestow upon us, out of thy fulness, grace sufficient for us. Stablish, strengthen, settle us, O Lord; and receive us finally into thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

 XLV.

THE SPRING AND COURSE OF SIN.

JAMES i. 13—17.

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man;

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Do not err, my beloved brethren.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

MANY persons have vainly attempted to discover the cause, why a holy God should have permitted Sin to enter his creation. None have been able to find out the reason, nor has God been pleased to reveal it. It is therefore a mystery; and a mystery it must remain.

The wisest persons are those who come to this conclusion; "Sin *does* exist—sin is our disease, and the Gospel is our remedy: instead, therefore, of disputing about the disease, let us aim at applying the cure."

1. Let us here notice, in the first place, the vain pretences of sinners. They would fain throw the blame of their sins on some one else, and not bear it themselves. They would even charge God with being the Author of sin. It seems as if this were part of that corrupt nature which we have received from Adam: for he, in his answer to God after the Fall, certainly appears to have intended to throw the blame—partly, at least—on God himself: "The woman, whom *Thou gavest* to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."—This murmuring against God, as though He were the cause of our sin, is sharply rebuked by St. Paul, in the words—"Nay but, O man, who art thou, that repliest against God?"

St. James, however, completely settles the matter, by solemnly declaring, that "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."

2. Where then shall we discover the real source of evil? The answer is plain—"Look within." There we shall see the spring of all our corruptions. "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." Any man who will allow his conscience to speak, must know this of himself. Sinful desires spring up within him, and draw him aside from the right way. Temptations may vary at different times, and under different circumstances: but sin always springs up, first, in some evil thought.

The heart is beguiled by "the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life"—by "the filthiness of the flesh, or the filthiness of the spirit"—by some old besetting sin; or else by some new sin, with which the man has only just become acquainted. When once the heart has consented, soon, alas! sin is committed; and with sin, death enters. The soul is benumbed; it is chilled; it is thrown into a state of estrangement from God, and suffers the awful consequences of wilful and presumptuous sin.

What a picture is this of man's heart! From small beginnings—by a glance, by a whisper, or by a short taste of sin—how many a soul has been ensnared! At length the sinner hastens after some favourite lust, and will not be stopped. He rushes forward headlong: and thus many perish in the multitude of their transgressions.

Sinners once giving themselves up to sin, become entangled in it, like a fly in a spider's web. The moment it is caught, it flutters and struggles to escape: but its wings and feet only get more entwined and fastened in the web; till at length its merciless enemy rushes upon it, and strikes it dead in a moment. So would sin entangle us, to our eternal ruin.

Satan is ever on the watch for his victim. He catches the sinner, as his prey.

Cannot *we*, from our own experience, remember, that our lusts have often beguiled, ensnared, and overcome us? Let us take all the shame to ourselves; and thank God, if we have not been given up to be ruined by our own vile hearts.

But as for our God and Saviour, let us glory in Him, and give thanks to Him for his great goodness. He is the Father of lights. From Him cometh down every good and perfect gift. So far from tempting us to evil, He is the source of every blessing.

When we think of Him, the words should be ready on our lips—"Thou art good, and doest good." He has furnished the true remedy of sin. He offers to pardon our innumerable past sins, when we draw near to Him with faith in his dear Son. "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." He promises also to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. He assures us that His "grace is sufficient for us." Thus he forgives, he restores, he guides, he upholds believers, to the end. And—He never changes: his love faileth not: his faithfulness is everlasting.

Do not err, then, by complaining of God. Rather lodge the complaint against yourself. Carry your own sinful heart before God. Tell Him how vile and helpless you are: lie low at his footstool; and ask of Him that pity, pardon, and strength, which he so freely offers to us miserable sinners.

Remember whence it is that we obtain our knowledge of this goodness of God. It is, from the blessed Bible! That Book is as a bright beam darting down on our dark world, from the throne of the glorious God, the Father of lights. The Bible is, indeed, a good and perfect gift! St. James calls it "the word of truth." By means of this word of truth God regenerates sinners; giving them a new nature;

even a heart full of light, and devoted to holiness. Oh then, blessed are they who follow God's holy word, and pray for the teaching of the Holy Spirit! The Spirit of God, and the written word of God, are our guides—our sure guides—to glory everlasting.

PRAYER.

O thou most holy Lord God, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity: Look not upon us, we humbly beseech thee, as we are in ourselves: but accept us in and through thy beloved Son, who is the Lord our righteousness. We are all as an unclean thing: we sin continually: the imagination of the thought of our heart is, by nature, only evil. Shouldest thou withdraw the assistance of thy grace, we should run greedily after every foolish and hurtful lust: we should drink in iniquity like water; yea, we should never cease sinning, till we had ruined ourselves, both soul and body in hell, and drawn down many others with us into the pit of destruction.

But oh the forbearance and long-suffering of our God and Saviour, who hath spared us in the midst of our rebellions, and granted us to hear the glad tidings of salvation, through Jesus Christ! Lord, we come unto thee, that our polluted souls may be washed in his most precious blood. We offer to thee our frail and corrupt hearts, that they may be sanctified by thy Spirit. Cast us not away from thy presence: take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

Thou knowest, Lord, the very secrets of our hearts: and thou hast seen how deceitfully and perversely we have often turned away from thee, and have

yielded to the sinful desires of the flesh. Thou hast seen our backslidings, which have been many. Often have we grieved thy Spirit, by secretly loving sin, even when we did not dare to commit sin. We have sinned against our own souls: and it is wonderful that we have not long since died the death of the sinner. To us belongeth shame and confusion of face. But, blessed be thy Name! to thee belong mercies and forgivenesses. O hide thy face from our sins, and blot out all our misdeeds.

We beseech thee, O Lord, give us henceforth a tender conscience, and a heart ever mindful of thy presence, that we may be kept from offending thee. O touch us with such a sense of thy holiness, and of the danger of sin, that we may abhor the very first thought of evil, and by the help of thy grace put it far from us. Cause us to delight in thy law, after the inner man. Give us victory over all the enemies of our souls. Perfect thy good work within us. Deliver us from all evil, and conduct us safely to thy kingdom of righteousness, peace, and glory, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

XLVI.

DOERS OF THE WORD.

JAMES I. 22—25.

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

THE Bible is like a mirror, in which a man may see his own face; that is to say, his character. Here he may see what he is: he may see also what he ought to be; and how the grace of God is freely offered to pardon the sinner and change his heart.

The Bible is "the word of truth:" and it is also called "the perfect law of liberty;" because it shows to us, who were born the slaves of Satan, how we may be freed from the curse due to sin, and how we may be freed from the love of sin, and brought to obey God, whose service is perfect freedom.

But, to profit by this word, we must be, not hearers only, but doers of the word—that is, of the work which it commands. Otherwise, to what use have we line upon line, and precept upon precept?

Let us take a few examples of the work, which it is commanded us to do.

1. The word of truth shows us the true grounds of humility, and why we ought to have a broken and a contrite heart. The word of God tells us most plainly, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Whichever way we look into this glass, we shall be sure to see some feature of our own guilty hearts: and it is much better that we should see all this, than that we should live and die ignorant of our state. But what good is there in our reading the Bible, unless we become convinced

of our sins, and sorry for them, and desirous to cast them off?

2. The Bible teaches us also the doctrine of Faith. While it shows us that we are in danger of falling into hell, it declares that Christ is mighty to save all that believe in Him. Do we then in this word of truth behold the hand, as it were, of Jesus stretched out to lay hold of us, while his voice seems to cry, Deliver this man from going down into the pit? But what will be the use of our seeing and knowing all this, if we do not with our hearts believe in this Saviour, and entirely give ourselves up to be saved by him?

3. Does the word of God show us our natural ignorance and blindness? Does it say to us, "Get wisdom; get understanding"—"If any man among you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth unto all men liberally, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him"? But of what use to us is a hasty glimpse of these promises, if we do not earnestly and constantly pray to have our hearts enlightened by the Holy Spirit?

4. Again, in the great work of subduing our corruptions, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God, the Bible is a sure guide. But how can it guide those who do not steadily follow it—who do not "continue" in it, as men willing to be reproved and corrected?

It may be well to take a few examples, to explain what I mean.

The oftener we look into this glass, the more clearly shall we discover any particular infirmity

which we may have, and the sin that doth so easily beset us.

—Is it Pride and Self-conceit? Then we meet with such texts as these: "Be not high-minded, but fear." "Be not wise in your own conceits." "Who-soever exalteth himself, shall be abased: but he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." But what is the use of our occasionally hearing this, unless we constantly pray and labour to mortify pride, and to be clothed with humility?

—Is Anger our besetting sin? We meet with very many texts in the Book of Proverbs on this subject. "He that is soon angry, is of small understanding." "A furious man aboundeth in transgression." "Better is he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." But what is the advantage of our being told these truths, if we do not earnestly seek to lay aside all wrath, and to be clothed with the meekness and gentleness of Christ?

—Is Covetousness, and the love of this world, our temptation? We find in the word of truth these sentences: "The covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth." "Mortify . . . covetousness, which is idolatry." "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." But to what advantage do we hear these plain commands, if we still continue idolizing the world, and hankering after its deceits?

—Is Sensuality or Sloth our besetting sin? Much is said in Scripture concerning the duty of denying the lusts of the flesh. Here, as in a glass, all the lovers of pleasure may behold their face. But if we hurry away from the word that speaks of Self-denial,

what profit have we from a hasty glance at our own miserable corruptions?

In short, the whole spirit of the Bible says to us, "Up, and be doing." The Judgment-day is speedily approaching: then we shall be judged, not by what we know, but by what we really are. How dreadful will that day be, to those who have utterly deceived themselves, thinking all safe, while trifling with the Bible and their own souls!

Let me then affectionately counsel you, my friend, to deal honestly with yourself. Here is the Bible, telling you all things necessary to salvation: study it. Here is grace offered—grace sufficient for you. Seek it, and use it. Be not "a forgetful hearer." Daily and hourly sit at the feet of Jesus, and hear his words. Strive to remember them: strive to obey them. The longer you continue as an obedient scholar in this school, the more you will delight to be in it. For, what a kind Master is Jesus! so wise, so patient, so forgiving; always ready to help dull scholars! I beseech you, then, continually listen to his words. Thus shall you be blessed in your deed. Jesus will bless you day by day—year by year—all your life long—in the hour of death, and for ever.

PRAYER.

O Lord, thy word is a light unto our feet, and a lantern unto our paths. We thank thee for its holy instructions, for its counsels and warnings, and for its exceeding great and precious promises. We bless thee for the knowledge of thy glorious perfections, and for the revelation of thy Covenant of mercy,

made sure to us in Christ Jesus. O let thy Spirit open our eyes, that we may behold and understand and love all the truths which thou hast revealed to us in thy holy word. Enlighten our dark minds: and when we are in doubt and perplexity, bring all those things to our remembrance, which are profitable for us; that we may walk before thee here below as obedient children, and, when we come to die, may have a good hope in thee, through the word of thy grace.

Lord, make us to be doers of thy word, and not hearers only, deceiving our own souls. Cause us to walk, as thy holy servants of old walked, in all the commandments of the Lord, blameless. As we have received of the Lord, how we ought to walk and please thee, so may we abound more and more. Let thy blessing rest upon us, whenever we meditate on thy word: let it be the food and the delight of our souls. Thus do thou guide us by thy counsel, O Lord; and afterward receive us to glory, for the merits of thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

XLVII.

SINS OF THE TONGUE.

JAMES iii. 1—13.

My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

But the tongue can no man tame: it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?

Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

THESE remarkable words were addressed by St. James to persons who professed themselves Christians. How lamentable to think, that any persons, bearing the holy name of Christ, should have called forth such a reproof as this! But, alas! do not we, in our day, need the same rebuke? Is it not as true now, as it was then, that "the tongue is an unruly evil?" Is it not "a deadly poison?" Nothing but the grace of God can tame it: nothing else can govern and sanctify it: nothing but the love of Christ can give purity and sweetness to our discourse.

The more we mix with society at large, the more

do we find ourselves tempted to sins of the tongue. We cannot even join together in works the most holy and benevolent, without some risk of falling into envying and strife: we forget the rule, "Swift to hear, slow to speak." We long to be masters: we desire that our opinion should take the lead: and if we can gain this superiority in no other way, then by loudness of voice, by a positive manner, and by boldness of contradiction, we try to carry all before us. Such is the way in which even good men fall into much sin, and into grievous condemnation.

It is evident, from what St. James says, that he who can bridle his tongue, must have gained a wonderful mastery over himself; so much so, that we may consider him as being, in a high degree, perfect. The man at the helm has the safety of the ship at his command, steering it skilfully through the most tremendous storms;—and a good rider can govern the wildest horse by the bit in his mouth. So, if we can but govern that little member, the tongue, we may manage almost any affair: for "death and life are in the power of the tongue."

My present remarks shall be grounded on the very language of the Bible. God grant us his Holy Spirit, that we may hear His word with profit!

1. First then, observe—there is in many persons a Tongue of Impiety and Blasphemy. "Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God;"—and what he says in his heart, he vents with his tongue. Multitudes now-a-days, in this Christian land, deny God, and his Son Jesus Christ. Some persons—awful to

tell!—even *preach* Infidelity. "They set their mouth against the heavens." They say, "With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?" Like Pharaoh, they exclaim, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?" Of all kinds of language, this is the very worst, the most horrible, that the tongue can utter. The faculty of speech was given to us, that we might bless the Lord: and when it is thus used, the tongue is—as David calls it—our "glory." See in Psalm lxxi. how a holy man uses his power of speech: "Let my mouth be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour, all the day." "My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and thy salvation, all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof." "My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed."

2. Next, there is the Tongue of Falsehood and Deceit. Solomon says, "A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour, is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow." And again, "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly, are his delight."

How much fraud is connected with bargains! "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth." A man thinks himself clever, if he can run a hard bargain; and makes light of all the trickery and absolute lying, by which he has got his money.

Flattery, though exceedingly acceptable to most men, is really no better than artful falsehood. "A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth

a net for his feet." "A flattering mouth worketh ruin."

Subtle, designing enemies, whose words are softer than oil, having war in their hearts, are not to be trusted. "He that hateth, dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; when he speaketh fair, believe him not; for there are seven abominations in his heart."

Hypocrisy in Religion may often deceive men, though it cannot deceive God. With their tongue, hypocrites may make "long prayers" and solemn professions; but it is only to receive "the greater damnation."

The blessed rule of Scripture is this—"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another." "Lie not to one another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." Love will ever lead us to do to others as we should wish to be done by:—and certainly we do not ourselves wish to be imposed on. In a word, we are to lay aside "all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speaking."

3. For the present, we will only notice, further, the Tongue of Anger, Contention, and Unkindness. "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but bitter words stir up anger." Alas! we are far more prone to break out into bitter words, than to speak words of kindness and peace. What exact descriptions doth Solomon give of those furious scenes, which are often witnessed among the ungodly. He says, "As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a

contentious man to kindle strife." And speaking of the foolish man, he says, "The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness; and the end of his talk is mischievous madness."—What pictures of misery are the following: "A continual dropping in a very rainy day, and a contentious woman, are alike." "It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman." "It is better to dwell in the corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman, in a wide house."—The Gospel rule is just the opposite of all this: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Some persons can never let a quarrel drop: they will have it over and over again. Solomon well says, "It is an honour for a man to cease from strife; but every fool will be meddling."

When unkindness and cutting wit are joined together, then, indeed, "the poison of asps is under their lips." "They shoot their arrows, even bitter words." "There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword."

On the other hand, how lovely is the character of the virtuous woman, described by Solomon! "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness."

We cannot at present go further into the subject: but in closing this visit, let me remark how strongly St. James speaks in chap. i. verse 26:—"If any man

among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." Mark that expression, "bridled not."—You may have observed, how a mettlesome horse will start off, without a moment's warning, and run away with his rider, or dash him to the ground. Such is the angry tongue: it flies off in an instant, into rash and mischievous words. Temper is such a quick thing, and the tongue is such a ready instrument, that unless a man be strictly on his guard, he may, in a moment, and by a single word, plunge into endless quarrels.

Satan, our cruel foe, who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, is always on the watch, to work upon our impious, deceitful, and violent passions. By them he strives to set the world and the Church in a blaze. "The tongue setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." Sometimes the enemy succeeds so well in embroiling Christians one with another, that you can hardly tell whether their Church be a true Church or not—whether or not professors of religion are blessing, or cursing their neighbours—whether their fruit be wholesome or bad—whether they be sweet waters, or bitter, that flow from their sanctuary.

But enough:—for the present, let us look up to God, to bestow on us that grace which alone can purify our hearts, and enable us to speak as men renewed in holiness, truth, and love.*

* The Prayer to this, and the following Portion, will be found at page 194.

XLVIII.

SINS OF THE TONGUE. (*Continued.*)

JAMES iii. 1—13. See Page 184.

WE have already considered three kinds of Sins of the tongue. Let us now examine the descriptions given in the Bible, of other abuses of our faculty of speech.

4. Observe next—the Foolish and Idle Tongue. Many persons indulge themselves in trifling conversation, and say they see no harm in it. Yet, our Saviour declares, "For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment." Solomon very significantly says, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin; but he that refraineth his lips is wise." Some persons speak out their thoughts at random, never considering either time, or place, or person. "A fool uttereth all his mind." Many talk without thinking at all; merely for talking's sake:—such persons cannot fail to utter much that is foolish and injurious. "The heart of the wise studieth to answer; but the mouth of fools poureth out evil things." They who thus give a loose to their tongues, are exceedingly displeasing to God. Perfect silence would be better than such trifling. Silence would at least give opportunity for meditation. "He that hath knowledge, spareth his words." "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding."

Many talkative persons lie under this great mis-

take;—they suppose, that the more they talk, the more interesting they are: whereas, it is speaking pleasantly and to the purpose, that makes men agreeable. “A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!”

5. There is a sin, into which persons of idle conversation are very ready to fall; namely, Tale-bearing: and, what is near akin to it, Slander. This is a most unneighbourly, a most cruel employment of the tongue. “A tale-bearer revealeth secrets.” “The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds.” “Where no wood is, the fire goeth out: so, where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth.” “A whisperer separateth chief friends.” Besides telling what they ought to keep to themselves, Tale-bearers are generally tempted to utter falsehood: they colour their stories, or sometimes they invent new ones, in order to amuse their hearers. Alas! what a shocking proof is this of our baseness and selfishness, that ever we should be entertained by hearing ill of others! Yet this is our natural disposition: if it were not so, there would probably be no more tale-bearers in the world; for they would meet with no encouragement. “An angry countenance driveth away a backbiting tongue.”

David so utterly abhorred this sin, that, in laying down rules for the government of his house and kingdom, he says of characters of this sort, and also of liars—“Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off.” “He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.”

6. Who can count the multitude of sins committed by the tongue, when it is given to Filthiness and foolish jesting, which are not convenient. It would be a shame even to repeat what many abandoned characters pour out, as it were, in torrents of polluting words. Men of every rank and condition in life, without any exception, if they cherish filthy thoughts in their hearts, will find utterance by bad language in one way or another. “Their throat is an open sepulchre”—full of corruption and of all uncleanness. But I must not dwell on this part of the subject any longer. He that has heard how coarsely and vilely some sinners can talk, will agree with St. James, that “the tongue is a world of iniquity.”

But what are the practical uses to be made of these remarks on sins of the tongue?—I will mention a few.

1. First observe, that we need not go far, in order to prove the corruption of our nature, and our own sinfulness before both God and man. If we only look at the manner in which we have offended with the Tongue, we soon shall have proof enough of our guilt. How many evil things have we uttered! and how backward are we to speak that which is good! Now, it is “out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh.” How full, then, must our hearts be of sin! how empty of goodness! We must lay our hand upon our mouth; and confess that we all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

2. What need, therefore, have we of the pardoning mercy of Christ! Whilst lying low, as it were

in the dust, in deep self-humiliation and shame, still let our lips breathe out this prayer, "Forgive!" Blot out of the book of thy remembrance all those innumerable sins of the tongue, whereby we have dishonoured thee, O Lord, and wounded the feelings, or tainted the conscience of our fellow-creatures!

3. And, for the time to come, let us seek more earnestly that grace, which alone can enable us to order our speech aright. The Lord invites us to the Fountain of grace, to receive abundantly from Him a spirit of wisdom, a spirit of courage, and a spirit of kindness; so that we may feel and speak and act as we ought to do. Let us pray for this grace daily.—Especially, if at any time we are placed in trying circumstances, when we hardly know what to say, or how to be silent, let us lift up our hearts unto the Lord. Let us pray for that "meekness of wisdom," which shall preserve us from saying any thing foolish, or unkind, or unnecessary.—And let us remember Him, who is our adorable pattern, the Lord Jesus Christ. The more we read of his history and discourses, the more will our hearts be touched with the love of Jesus, and with a desire to walk even as He walked. We shall often rise from studying a chapter of the Gospels, with those words of admiration bursting from our lips—"Never man spake like this man!"

PRAYER.

O Lord God Almighty, thou art the Fountain of holiness, and of truth, and of all goodness. Thy hands have made us, and fashioned us: Thou hast given

to us the powers of reason and speech, and thereby raised us far above the brutes that perish. From thee none of our thoughts are hidden: there is not a word in our tongues, but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether.

O thou holy and omniscient God, we cannot reflect on what we are in thy sight, without owning that to us belongeth shame and confusion of face. We have especial cause to humble ourselves before thee, for our abuse of the gift of speech. The tongue was given to us by thee, that, being sanctified to thy service, it might be our glory: but, alas! times without number we have most grievously offended thee, and dishonoured thy Gospel, and done harm to others, by sinful words, or by light and unprofitable conversation. In our childhood and youth, and in later years, we have been guilty of deceit and falsehood; and very often have we spoken unadvisedly with our lips. We have not always done to others, as we would they should do unto us: we have uttered things to the hurt of our neighbour. We have sometimes dealt in scornful and proud wrath: at other times, we have spoken what was unseemly, and foolish, and corrupting. O Lord, we have fearfully added to that multitude of sinful words, whereby the earth is disquieted, and thy Holy Name dishonoured. Shouldest thou enter into judgment with us, we must lay our hands upon our mouths, and stand before thee speechless and self-condemned.

But we beseech thee, for thy dear Son's sake, to forgive us all that is past, and to remember no more the sins and follies to which our lips have given

utterance. And, O Lord, do thou mercifully prevent the evil which might arise from our vain conversation; and suffer us not to become a stumbling-block, or the cause of sin, to others, through our words. And where mischief hath arisen from our folly, Lord, enable us, if it be possible, to repair it.

Teach us, O Lord, by thy Holy Spirit, to govern the thoughts and imaginations of our hearts, and to order our whole conversation according to thy word. Enable us to walk in wisdom toward them that are without: and, in company with the faithful, may we ever speak that which is good, to the use of edifying. Cause us to understand the time when to speak, and when to be silent. Let not mercy and truth forsake us. Make us wise to win souls, to invite the careless, to rebuke the profane, to convince the gainsayer, to support and guide the weak, and to comfort the afflicted. May we not only keep our tongue from evil, and our lips that they speak no guile; but also seek peace, and pursue it; acting as peace-makers, and walking as the sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

Give peace in our time, O Lord. Deliver thy servants from the strife of tongues, and let not the foot of pride come against us. Let not oppressors prevail against thy Church. Keep us from all vain disputings and unprofitable controversies. Mercifully heal every disorder of thy Church, and silence the hard speeches of profane and ungodly men.

Endue the Ministers of thy Gospel with the meekness of wisdom. Let them have grace to make known thy Name with all boldness: put into their

lips the word of wisdom; and enable them to speak the truth in love. Let their doctrine drop as the rain, and their speech distil as the dew. And grant to all thy people grace, that they may by their good conversation adorn the Gospel of Christ, and walk even as Jesus walked.

Enable us, O Lord, whilst we live, to speak and act for thy glory: and, should it be agreeable to thy wise and holy will, enable us in our dying moments to bear testimony to thy loving-kindness and faithfulness, O God, thou God of our salvation!

And when we depart hence, and our tongues are silent in the dust, O receive us into everlasting habitations. Let our lot be with thy redeemed people in heaven above; there to join the blessed host, who sound thy praises with ten thousand times ten thousand tongues, singing—Salvation unto our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever!

Hear us and answer us, according to the multitude of thy mercies, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

XLIX.

HUMILITY.

1 PETER V. 5.

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

ALL persons praise Humility; yet how few excel in it! The venerable Apostle, St. Peter, bids us to be clothed with Humility—to wear it as a robe and

garment, and let it constantly be visible in our whole deportment.

True Humility begins in deep abasement of heart before God, on account of sin. Poor, guilty, weak creatures as we are, what is there in us, that we can possibly boast of? We can never sufficiently abase ourselves before the most high and holy God.

The Humility of a Christian is altogether a self-renouncing grace. The humble man gives all glory to God, taking none to himself. He makes his boast in Christ, and in Christ alone, all the day long; devoutly singing that hymn—"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." "For," as St. Paul argues, "what hast thou, which thou hast not received?"—It is true, we do right in observing and measuring the gifts, talents, and powers which we have received from God: else we should not know what to thank God for; neither should we know how to obey his command—"Occupy till I come." But, viewing our talents aright, we ought to consider—(what vain man continually forgets)—that these gifts do not proceed from ourselves. They were received freely from God: and are to be rendered back, with large interest, to him. So David says, "All things come of thee; and of thine own have we given thee." (1 Chron. xxix. 14.)

Hence, observe—the richer any man is in grace, so much the more humble is he: like a tree laden with fruit, its heavy branches bending to the ground.

Peter himself was truly an humble man. He fell grievously, when he denied Christ: but he was restored, and made watchful over his own spirit. How

fitly therefore does he counsel us to be lowly, self-distrustful, and vigilant.

But when he says, "Be ye clothed with humility," he surely does not mean that we are to put on the outward garb of humility, without having the reality of that grace within. This would be vile hypocrisy;—an hypocrisy so gross, that it can often be detected even by men: much more is it abhorred of God! But the beauty of this grace is fully seen, when the outward demeanour is fashioned, as it ever must be, by inward, genuine lowliness of heart. The perfect adorning of a Christian consists in the hidden man of the heart: hidden indeed, yet shining outwardly by the irresistible loveliness of humility: a grace which hides itself, yet cannot be hid.

This deportment of the humble man I now request you to study, in the following particulars: and in considering them, may we have for our Teacher the Spirit of Him who was meek and lowly in heart, even Jesus, our Lord and Master!

1. Humility is a retiring and refraining grace. A proud man pushes forward, never satisfied till he reaches the chief room. An humble man in lowliness of mind esteems others better than himself. Therefore he holds back, taking that lowest place which others desert. And there he contentedly waits, till it is said to him, "Friend, come up higher."

2. Humility is a submissive grace. The proud man thinks himself at least every body's equal; and most men's superior;—therefore he scorns to yield. He will not give up his own opinion; no, not even to the aged. He can bear no check. Humble men, on the

contrary, know that the wisdom of the Christian life consists very much in submitting, and in yielding.

3. Humility is a meek and patient grace; forbearing and forgiving. Pride can put up with no affronts;—nay, even catches at quarrels, and almost makes them; while Humility passes them by, and lets them die away. Humility, moreover, can bear real injuries; complaining of them only to God. Thus, by patience, an humble man lets the wound heal: his trouble does not become—(as is the case with proud men)—a fretting sore. Most assuredly, “the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.”

4. Humility is a gentle and quiet grace. The proud hurry on, full of self-important bustle; eager, imperious, and loud. The humble, on the contrary, are mild in word and action; by all means shunning contention and the spirit of contradiction.

5. Humility is a silent grace. The proud love to hear their own voice, and are unwilling to lose any opportunity of speaking their minds. The humble are “swift to hear, slow to speak.” And “the words of the wise are heard in quiet.”

But enough at present. We will, at another time, consider some more of the particular qualities of Humility. Let me only remark further, that this grace especially befits the Young: “Likewise ye younger submit yourselves unto the elder.” And yet it is a grace suitable to every age and station: “Yea, all of you be subject one to another.”—This spirit of universal humility is no-where taught, except in the Holy Scriptures. Thanks be to God for this inestimable Book!

PRAYER.

O Lord God Almighty, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises: We bow down before thy Divine Majesty, humbling ourselves on the remembrance of our many and great transgressions. By reason of sin, we are not worthy to come into thy presence: but thou hast appointed a way by which we may draw near unto thee, even through thy dear Son, Christ Jesus. Lord, grant us the grace of faith, that by it we may lay hold of the merits of our Redeemer. Be merciful, O Lord, be merciful unto us, miserable sinners: receive us back to thy favour, and save us with an everlasting salvation.

We beseech thee to maintain within us a broken and contrite heart, that we may mourn over our sins unfeignedly, and never lift up ourselves in self-exaltation before thee, our holy and forgiving Redeemer. All we have, and all we hope for, is from Thee, and from thy free and undeserved grace. When thou art pacified towards us, let us still walk humbly with thee our God. Yea, let thine exceeding and wonderful goodness melt and subdue our hearts, filling us with still deeper and deeper self-abasement, and gratitude, and love.

Cause us, we pray thee, to walk before men with the meekness and gentleness of our Master. Enable us to manifest humbleness of mind, and to be patient towards all men. Make us kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.

Hear us, O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

L.

HUMILITY. (*Continued.*)

1 PETER V. 5.—See page 197.

LET me offer you, my friend, as I promised, a few more short remarks on the nature of Humility—a grace so constantly enforced in the Scriptures. We have one perfect example of it, and one only; the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. He therefore says, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

6. Humility is a truly courteous grace; and, like Charity, “doth not behave itself unseemly.” Pride, on the contrary, is well known by its rude, overbearing behaviour—by the hasty answer, the haughty step, and by manners unbecoming a follower of Jesus. The kindness and good sense of a well-trained, humble Christian adorn him with a real gracefulness of deportment. He shines, not with affected politeness, but with genuine courtesy.

7. Humility is a lover of order. Pride and Self-will are ready to throw every thing into confusion, if they cannot get their own way:—but humble men desire to know and keep their proper place and station.

8. Humility is a cheerful grace: whereas Pride is sullen, hard to please, and soon put out of humour.

9. Humility is also a friendly grace, willing in all things to be helpful and serviceable: whereas the proud man is selfish, and envious of those who seem to be in his way. Humble men willingly stand aside, and let others be promoted before them.

10. Humility is a sympathizing grace; grieved when others fall into trouble—still more so, when they fall into sin!—and is heartily desirous to raise up the fallen. At such times, an humble man remembers his own weakness, and considers how very soon he also may be tempted. Pride, on the contrary, maliciously rejoices when an enemy falls; and would fain trample him still lower.

11. Humility is a watchful grace. A proud man is rash, headstrong, and perpetually off his guard. But humble men know their own weakness, and the power of their spiritual enemies: therefore, they “walk circumspectly,” and “watch unto prayer.”

12. Humility is a self-denying grace. Where there is no self-denial, there can be no humility. We should imitate the spotless Redeemer, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich. “For even Christ pleased not himself.”

And now, my friend, let me plainly ask, How is it that we have so high an admiration for humility in others, and yet find it so hard to be ourselves humble? Is it not, because Self-love stands in the way?—But I shall be happy to read these remarks to you again—possibly more than once or twice, if you should have convenient time: for, besides much prayer, it requires much attention, and frequent reflection, fully to enter into the spirit of Humility.

PRAYER.

O Lord Jesu Christ, who thyself wast meek and lowly in heart: Put thy Holy Spirit within us, that

our souls may be renewed, and fashioned after thy blessed image. Be thou our Sanctifier, as thou art our example. Cause us not only to know thee, but to be like thee, and to follow in thy steps. Clothe us with humility. Oh, what have we to be proud of! Wherein can we glory! Who or what are we, that we should boast ourselves in thy presence, or before men! Gracious God, let the remembrance of our frequent pride humble us to the very dust. We would lay our hand on our mouth, and never more speak of ourselves before thee, but with shame and confusion of face.

Heavenly Father, whatever thou seest to be needful, in order to make and keep us humble, do thou in thy wisdom and mercy appoint for us. Reserve us from murmuring at that rod, with which thou dost chasten and correct thy children. Order our steps in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, that we may not be provoked to envy them, or to be angry, or to speak unadvisedly with our lips. Make us contented and thankful. Deliver us from the natural pride and vain-glory of our selfish hearts. Let us not be like the children of this world, minding high things, and desirous of the chief place. Let us willingly be, like our Master, of no reputation: yea, let us be even as nothing in this world, if only we may find peace in thee, and have Thee for our portion.

Teach us, O Lord, fervently to love those, to whom thou hast granted like mercy with ourselves. Enable us to walk with them as brethren: make us willing to please, not our own selves, but every man his

neighbour for his good, to edification; in lowliness of mind esteeming others better than ourselves. Cause the light of thy countenance to shine upon us, that we may have comfort in thee, and fellowship one with another; and, that our joy may be full.

Hear us, and do for us even more than we have asked, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

 LI.

CONFESSION OF SIN, AND FORGIVENESS.

1 JOHN i. 8—10.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

ALL have sinned: and the wages of sin is death. This is the undeniable doctrine of the word of God. And yet, many are so impious as to account God cruel, because he punishes men in this world, and threatens to punish them eternally in the next, on account of their sins.

Thousands and tens of thousands have the presumption to say, that they never committed sins worthy of death. What is this, but contradicting the word of God? It is making God a liar. It is denying the truth of what He says. Among men, the greatest insult that can be offered to any one, is, to call him a liar. How then dare we give the lie to God's

word, when he declares—"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

There are many persons who cannot altogether deny that they are sinners, yet still deceive themselves by vain excuses, and by false notions concerning sin. They will tell you, that only the worst of men deserve punishment; such as murderers, and other excessively bad characters. But if you ask them whether they themselves do not deserve punishment, they answer—"Surely not! we know that we are sinners, as well as the rest of mankind: but God is very merciful: He is sure to forgive us what we do against Him: we try to do no harm to any body, and to be as just and charitable as we can. What more can be expected of us?"

Such is the manner in which multitudes talk and think; and in doing so, they miserably deceive their own souls.

Let me affectionately ask you, my friend, whether *you* are speaking in this smooth way to your conscience. Is it not far the best to go humbly to God, confessing our sins? Our transgressions are many: they are great: they are more in number than the hairs of our head: they are a burden heavy enough to sink us into hell. Yet God is willing to forgive them all—even the very worst of them, and those which torment our consciences the most grievously. If we heartily repent of them, and believe in Jesus, who died to take away the sin of the world, he will save us. Oh, will you not believe this faithful God, who tells you that the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin? Will you not repent?

Will you not confess your sins? Will you not forsake them? Will you not love and serve this merciful Redeemer? Will you not turn and live?

Remember that great rule of the word of God—"He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy."

PRAYER.

Lord, we confess before thee that our sins are many and great, and that we deserve thy wrath and everlasting punishment. We desire not to deceive ourselves. Cause us, O God, to believe the awful threatenings of thy word, and not to listen to the voice of the Tempter, saying, as of old, Ye shall not surely die! O Lord, we know, and are solemnly assured by thee, that the wages of sin is death. Make us to tremble, and to humble ourselves in thy sight, that we may at length flee unto Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come.

Merciful Saviour, who didst shed thy blood upon the Cross to redeem us from death: Hear us while we entreat thee to plead thy merits, as our Advocate with the Father. Thou art the propitiation for our sins: Thou hast borne the curse due to our guilt: O deliver us from condemnation: sprinkle our consciences with thine atoning blood, and grant us peace in thee. Let thy Spirit cleanse and purify our hearts, and fix in us the love of thy holy will. Strengthen our faith: enliven our hope: enlarge our charity: quicken our obedience: and to thee, O Lord Jesus, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, we will ascribe everlasting praise. Amen.

LII.

GOD IS LOVE.

1 JOHN iv. 7—12.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God.

He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

THE disciple, whom Jesus loved, was remarkably fitted to write on the subject of holy love: consequently, we find his Epistles full of this delightful subject. From the beginning to the end of this Epistle, his constant themes are, the love of our Redeemer towards us; and our obligations to love Him, and the brethren. Never, indeed, shall we fully understand St. John's writings, till we reach heaven itself, where the saints are perfected in love.

St. John recommends this heavenly grace, chiefly by the two following considerations:

1. Because love is the nature of God himself: for "God is love." The Apostle points to that great manifestation of His love towards us; namely, his sending his Son to die for us. We are also reminded, that it was not we who first loved God; but God, who first loved us. What could lost sinners do, in this matter of loving God? Nothing whatever.

Sinners naturally dread him, hate him, fly from him. We are naturally like Adam, who hid himself in the garden from his Maker. But when we hear how He has given his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, we begin to hope in him, to love him, and to desire to serve him. "We love him, because he first loved us." Now the Lord bestows upon us his Spirit. Now a new nature is wrought in us, whose first fruit is love.

2. Hence arises another weighty reason why we should cherish the spirit of love; namely, that it is the grand mark of our regeneration. "Love is of God." Truly to love him with the whole heart, and our neighbour as ourselves, is the sure proof that we are his children. By this we may see whether we have his image stamped on our soul. If destitute of love, we should account ourselves not born of God. Without love, we do not know God. If we are without love, God does not dwell in us.

Consider, my friend, whether this heavenly grace dwells and flourishes in your heart. Are you a child of God in name only, or in nature? Do you truly love God, living to his glory—or, are you earthly, and in your natural state? Do you truly love your neighbour as yourself; or is Self your idol?

To rouse you more effectually, let me offer these two most solemn reflections.

1. Since God is love, reflect on this thought—What then must Hell be! It is a banishment from this loving God and Saviour, for ever and for ever. When once those tremendous words, "Depart from me," shall have passed his lips, immediately, and for ever, will sinners be driven into hell-fire, prepared for the

Devil and his Angels. There they will have no more hope. They will have no Saviour to pardon and deliver them; no promise of the Holy Spirit, to refresh them with love, joy, and peace. In hell there are no friends to invite them to taste of consolation; but all are shut up together, in hopeless misery and despair. They lie down in everlasting burnings, with not so much as a drop of water to cool their tongue. O my friend, if you have a spark of feeling left, listen to the voice of mercy! "God is love." Hear him now, that you may not dwell for ever in that place of torment.

2. Yet again: since God is love, think—What must Heaven be! What joy, to dwell in His presence, and to be perfected in love for ever. Even here, affectionate believers can say from the heart, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison with thee!" But when once they shall have reached that blessed height of glory, they will join the innumerable company of Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect:—they will begin to spend an eternity of love, with God, the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost. Let us pray that we may attain this blessedness. May the God of love and peace, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, rule in our hearts here; and may He take us up hereafter to dwell in his presence for ever. Amen.

PRAYER.

O Lord God, infinitely blessed and glorious, whose name is Love: We are not worthy to come into thy

presence; neither are we able so much as to lift up our eyes unto heaven, except Thou draw us, and open for us the way of access unto thyself. For ever blessed be thy name! thou hast shown us how we may come boldly, at all times, to the throne of grace; even through Jesus, the Son of thy love, in whom thou art always well pleased.

Behold us, therefore, miserable outcasts, returning to thee our Heavenly Father. Behold us groaning beneath the burden of our sins, but coming to the foot of Thy cross, O blessed Jesus! We look unto Thee for pardon, peace, and deliverance. O shed abroad in our hearts the gift of the Holy Ghost, who is the Teacher, Sanctifier, and Comforter of thy people; that we may know and believe the love that God hath to us. May He dwell within us, as a witnessing Spirit; bearing witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God. May He cast out from us all unholy passions, all tormenting fears, and unbelieving doubts. Perfect, O Lord, the work of grace in our souls: unite us to thyself in Christ, our glorious Head: and seal us with the Holy Spirit of promise, unto the day of redemption.

O most blessed Lord God Almighty: while Angels and Saints behold thy face, and worship thee with joy unspeakable, help us to meditate on thy word and works, thy name and thy nature; and cause us to see, in all, thy character of Love. Pity our great blindness, our coldness of heart, and the earthly and carnal temper of our affections. O renew us more perfectly after thine own image; that we may know and feel what Thou art, by the Spirit which thou

hast given us. Grant unto us, according to the riches of thy glory, to be strengthened with might by thy Spirit in the inner man: that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith: that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God.

Hear, Lord, and answer us, exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, through Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

LIII.

THE JUDGMENT-DAY.

REVELATION XX. 11, 12.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

It is an awful thing to die:—most awful, to be removed from this world, and taken to stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ. Yet to a believer the prospect of that day has something in it comforting, and even joyful. May the Holy Spirit fill our souls with godly fear and hope, while looking forward to the bar of Christ's judgment, before which we all must soon appear, to be judged for Eternity!

What was seen by St. John in vision, will be seen by him and by all of us, in reality, at the Last-day. The great white throne is Christ's Judgment-seat, which is established in righteousness. When he takes his seat upon that throne to judge mankind, the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: the earth, also, and the works that are in it, shall be burned up. Nothing will then be seen, but the Judge, the great white throne, and the innumerable hosts standing before it.

1. First, reflect on the Multitude who will then be assembled. "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God:" "a great multitude; which no man can number." All that have ever lived on earth, from Adam down to the latest generation—millions upon millions—little infants that died when not a day old, with the aged of a hundred years and more—the poor and the rich—the wicked and the righteous—will all stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ.

O my soul! remember that thou also wilt be there. That hour of judgment will as much concern thee, as if thou wert to stand, all alone and single, before the bar of God! O Conscience, begin now the solemn inquiry, "How shall I meet my holy Judge!"

2. Consider next—the Judgment. "The Books were opened." Books of truth, showing the grounds of God's holy decrees; and Books of evidence, whereby it may be made known who, and what, we have been, and are.

There will be the Book of God's Revelation, that is, the Bible. This teaches us who God is, who Jesus is, who the Holy Spirit is: and it shows us what *we* are, and what we *ought* to be; and how sinners may find mercy with the Lord, now, in an acceptable time. The Bible—now so often neglected and despised—oh, how bright and glorious will it appear in the Day of Judgment! All the dead will be judged according to the eternal truths contained in that Book.

Then also will be opened the Book of God's Remembrance. In it, all our thoughts, words, and deeds are noted down. Each man's history is taken down there: and it is taken down truly, and exactly. No disguises, no excuses, no half-told tale will then appear; but the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Every man's Conscience will then become, as it were, an open book. Sinners will not be able to prevent Conscience from speaking. They will bear witness aloud, even against themselves.

3. Reflect, consequently, what will be the Sentence then passed on all impenitent sinners, for eternity. All will be judged according to the things written in the Books, according to their works. Therefore, "the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Fools that they were, in this life, making a mock at sin! But, as they could not escape the first death, so neither will they

escape the second. O that sinners would now repent, and flee unto Jesus, who alone can deliver them from the wrath to come!

4. But this sentence of everlasting death will not be passed on all men. No, blessed be God! there is another Book then to be opened, which is, the Book of Life. In another place, St. John calls it, the Lamb's Book of Life. It contains the names of those who follow Jesus in faith and love and holiness; who seek salvation through His death, and whose hearts have been changed by his indwelling Spirit. Concerning these He says—"I know my sheep, and am known of mine." He also says of himself, that he "callest his own sheep by name." All believers are well known to Jesus; their "names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."

O my friend, do you desire to know whether *your* name is written in that Book? Then let this be your inquiry—"Am I faithfully and constantly studying God's holy word? Have I believed in it? Is Christ the Lord of my heart at this present time? Do I live as one redeemed by his blood? Does the Spirit of Christ rule within me, mortifying all carnal and worldly lusts?"—If this be *not* your state, you have cause to fear. O hasten, through the help of his grace, to work out your salvation.—But if we *are* truly serving and following Christ, then let us be of good cheer: for in a little time He will come, to perfect the salvation of his saints. "Fear not, little flock: for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh!"

PRAYER.

O most holy Lord, Judge of all men, who triest the very hearts and the reins, and who wilt bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil: How can we, unworthy and guilty creatures, answer thee to one charge of a thousand! We were born in sin: and throughout our whole lives we have been adding iniquity unto iniquity. Our best services deserve only thy wrath. All these things are written in thy Book: yea, and our own consciences testify against us: our mouth is stopped, and we must acknowledge ourselves altogether guilty before thee our God.

But there is forgiveness with thee, O Lord; and with thee there is plenteous redemption. According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out our transgressions. We plead the name and merits of thy dear Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ: for He is the Lamb of God, who was slain to take away the sins of the world. Bestow upon us a living faith in him, as the propitiation for our sins; and let thy Holy Spirit richly endue us with sanctifying grace; that we may be enabled to love thy will, and to obey thee from the heart, as thy redeemed servants.

O Lord, our time is short, and we must soon appear before thy Judgment-seat. Stir up thy servants while it is day, to walk in the light, as children of light; that when the night cometh, wherein no man can work, we may not fall under the condemnation of unprofitable servants. Guide us in the path of life, and bring us to the inheritance of thy chosen people. Quicken us in doing those good works,

which thou hast before ordained that we should walk in them. And thus, O Lord, being justified through faith in Jesus, and daily renewed by thy Holy Spirit, may we have comfort, peace, and hope, and not be ashamed before thee at thy coming, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

LIV.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF HEAVEN.

REVELATION XXII. 1—5.

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

The pure river of water clear as crystal, here spoken of by St. John, denotes the fulness of joy and holiness, attained by the saints in glory. It is described as flowing from the throne of God, and of the Lamb. God himself is the alone Spring and Fountain of joy: this joy flows to us through Christ, the Mediator: and he imparts it by the gift of the Holy Spirit. And whereas the river was pure and clear, this shows that in heaven our knowledge and enjoyment of God will be perfect, and lively, and glorious.

From that glorious throne, "the throne of God and of the Lamb," streams of heavenly grace flow down, even to us on earth. At these streams, we, parched and thirsty creatures—we, unworthy and perishing sinners—may drink, and be refreshed, and live for ever. These lower streams of mercy flow in all the ordinances of grace; and especially in the blessed word of God. If we keep close to these streams of grace, we shall gradually rise higher and higher, and at length reach the Fountain, even God himself, in heaven above.

And, what is Heaven?—May the Spirit of God help you and me in some good measure to understand the words of the beloved disciple, St. John, who here describes it!

1. Heaven is a place of Blessedness. No curse can enter there.—Here below, all is under the curse. Sin has brought upon us sorrow, sickness, death, and the terror of eternal death. But if we are seeking pardon by faith in the blood of Jesus, already we are freed from the curse of the law, and we shall walk before God, even on earth, in newness of life. Thus is sin blotted out; the life of holiness is begun; sickness is sanctified; death is made the gate of life. What a change is this! It is glory begun here below!—But in heaven itself, these blessings shall be perfected. There the inhabitant shall not say, "I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." There, no temptation to do evil shall ever enter; no, not even an inclination to sin. And as sin will be eternally banished, so likewise sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Oh, blessed company of the Saints in glory; where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away!"

2. Heaven is a place of Holy worship, and sweet communion with the Lord, our Life, and our Redeemer. Before his throne, Saints and Angels stand, beholding his face continually. Here below, we see him only by faith in his word: there we shall see him face to face. Here, at best, we serve him very imperfectly: alas! so poorly, that we must often wonder how he can accept us: yet he does accept us, through Christ. But, there, we shall adore and obey him perfectly. And on our foreheads will he write his own glorious Name. He will make us holy, and preserve us holy, for ever. We shall be His, and He will be ours, everlastingly.

Sacred Ordinances, which we are commanded to use while we sojourn here below, will not be needed in heaven. These means of grace on earth are as a lamp to a man in a dark night: they just serve to show him his way, step by step. But in heaven we shall no more want these feeble tapers. All will be light, around us and within us. "The Lord shall be thine everlasting light; and thy God, thy glory."

3. The crown and perfection of this bliss in heaven, is, its Immortality. The Saints shall reign with Jesus for ever and ever. Adam, our first father, enjoyed a bliss in Paradise—but it endured not. He fell into sin, and thus death entered the world; and

he and our mother Eve were driven out of Paradise. They were kept from entering again the garden of Eden, by Cherubims, and by a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life. But the paradise which Jesus offers, can never be thus lost. Death cannot enter it. Jesus "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." The Tree of Life is there: its leaves are healing; its fruits are delicious and abundant. All manner of spiritual enjoyment will be the portion of those who live and die in the faith and service of Jesus. And these leaves and fruits will never fade; never, never decay. The inheritance of the Saints is "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Our souls shall flourish in eternal youth. Our very bodies shall be glorious, and imperishable: for "this corruptible shall put on incorruption; and this mortal shall put on immortality."

Do you, my friend, desire to be found among the Blessed, in that day when Christ shall make all things new? O then, pray that you may be renewed and prepared for it, in heart and mind, now while on earth. According to what we are here, so shall it be with us hereafter. "If we be dead with Christ"—dead to the world and sin—"we shall also live with him: if we suffer with him"—fighting the good fight of faith—"we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us!"

O, then, come to Jesus, now in an acceptable time, that you may have life;—yea, that you may have it more abundantly. Seek the Lord, and His strength:

seek His face evermore. Serve Him joyfully. "Set your affections on things above." "Labour to enter into that rest." Soon shall you hear his gracious welcome—"Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

PRAYER.

O most gracious God, our Father in Christ Jesus, thou that keepest mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin: We bow down before thee, unworthy of the least of all thy mercies; but humbly hoping to receive of His fulness, even grace for grace. We thank thee, that we are invited to wait upon thee in prayer. We bless thee for all the means of grace, by which thou dost lead thy children to eternal glory. We rejoice in the precious gift of thy Holy Scriptures, and in the knowledge of Christ crucified. O let these streams of grace always attend us, in our journeyings through this great wilderness: and let thy Holy Spirit so bless to us the use of thine appointed ordinances, that we may find them abundantly healing and strengthening to our souls, till we are brought safely out of all temptations and sorrows, to the city of our God, the heavenly Jerusalem above.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who sittest at the right hand of the Father, ever making intercession for thy believing people: Uphold and guide us by thy Spirit, that we faint not. Thou hast, by thy mighty arm, brought many sons to glory: and the host of thy redeemed ones are still pressing onward to that crown of righteousness which thou wilt give to all them that are faithful unto death. O blessed Jesus, keep

those who desire to be found in Thee: let none of them be lost. Suffer us not to wander from thee: preserve us from falling through sin and unbelief. Keep us by thy power, through faith, unto salvation.

Enable us, Lord, while here below, to rejoice in the communion of the saints, and to abound in good works toward them and toward all men. Let our delight be in our brethren and companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, with whom we hope to spend an eternity of blessedness at thy right hand. Lord, purify and extend thy Church on earth; that all the kingdoms of this world may speedily become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

Hear us, O King of saints, when we call upon thee: and receive us at length unto Thyself, together with the innumerable company that shall surround thy throne, to sing with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE END.

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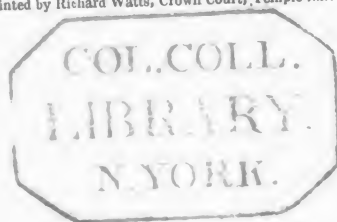
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